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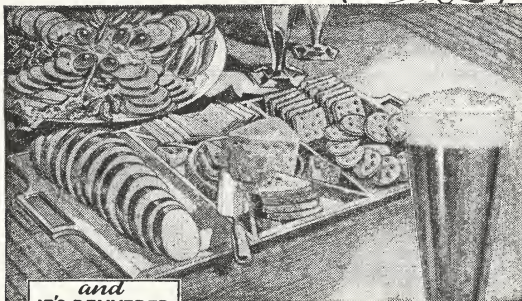
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The Heart Dictates

By Beulah Rhodes Overman

JOSEPHINE sprinkled scouring powder liberally in the bathtub, picked up a scrubbing brush, and set to. She had pinned back her red-brown hair to keep it out of her eyes, and was happy in a rebellious sort of way. When she felt the scouring powder on her soft, white hands she had a desire to rub it in; to scrub her nails with it. But likely

it would leave them glossy and bright as it would leave the tub.

Glossy and bright. Perfectly shaped. Perfectly mooned. Three years they had been like that. Not once had a finger nail been broken or jagged. Seldom, very seldom, had one so much as been roughened. And she was tired of it, as she was tired of Esther's everlasting cau-

tions. And of William. All because of a man she had never seen until yesterday. A man who had smooth, black hair and roguish blue eyes, and who hadn't tried to keep sarcasm out of his voice when he said, "Now, wouldn't a broken finger nail be just too terrible?"

"Josephine!" came unexpectedly from the bathroom door, and Josephine straightened up rebelliously.

Esther should have been gone ten minutes ago. She was driving to the city to shop and to bring William out for the week-end. Kind, commonplace, uninteresting William to whom Josephine was engaged, and, just now, thinking seriously of not being.

"Yes, my dear," she said, poisonously sweet.

Esther ignored her tone. "What in the world are you doing? What if you should break a nail?" And in the same breath: "Have you forgotten that William is coming for the week-end?"

"No, and it isn't likely I shall, with you to remind me. But what has that to do with my scrubbing the bathtub or breaking a finger nail?"

Esther glared at her sister, if it is possible for a well-bred woman to glare, but Josephine went on:

"Did it ever occur to you," she wanted to know, "that I'd like to live my own life for just a few days? That I'd like to—for a week, say—forget I have practically the loveliest hands in the world?"

"Forget your hands?" Esther was horrified. "If I had them, I'd need no one to caution me to protect them."

"A pity they aren't yours," said Josephine, rinsing off the scouring powder and applying a specially prepared lotion. "I thought you were gone. I heard the car leave."

"I came back to remind you that I wouldn't be home until late, and that William hates waiting for dinner."

"I would like," said Josephine, making a face, "to forget William along with my hands."

"Why, Josephine, you know you care for William."

"I'm wild about olives and pork sausage, too, but I wouldn't care for them as a steady diet."

"I don't understand you this morning," said Esther. "And I haven't time to argue. I'm late now. But do try to have everything as nice as possible. I gave Ellen the menu, but you had better see to the table and flowers. If you pick them yourself, be sure to wear gloves."

Be sure to wear gloves. Don't do this. Don't do that. Be careful with her hands. Never her face, or her form, or her voice which wasn't at all bad; but always her hands, as if hands were all she possessed. And, in a way, weren't they? How else could she have made a living—a really splendid living—for herself and Esther after her father's death, except by having her hands photographed and painted and exhibited? And she couldn't blame Esther for her cautions. Esther had, one might say, discovered her hands. Certainly she had "put them over." First with the cold cream people, then with the nail polish manufacturers.

It had been Esther who put them over with William, too. For William was interested in Josephine's hands, particularly her finger nails, long before he was interested in her. She sometimes wondered if he ever really saw beyond her hands. But, of course, he did. William was a dear. It was only that that darned man she had bumped into yesterday, as she entered the post office, kept pop-

ping into her mind. The way he had looked at her, as if appraising her from slender ankles to curling red-brown bob, missing nothing, especially not her well-kept hands. And when she had shaken her hand—the door had banged against it—and said to herself, "Oh, what if I'd broken a nail!" he had replied:

"Now, wouldn't that have been just too terrible? What a relief it would be to meet a girl sometime who could forget her looks, even if she was beautiful, which you aren't."

"I wish," Josephine replied angrily, "I could meet a man, now and then, who wasn't a brute. If you'll give me my package"—he had picked it up and hadn't offered it to her—"I'll go. In the future, see if you can't watch where you're going."

"I watch? Say——" But she had gone.

Perhaps she would have forgotten the man, rudeness and all, if his eyes hadn't been so blue and his hair so black; if his shoulders hadn't been broad and his head far above her own. She might have forgotten all that, likely she would have, if his voice hadn't persisted in ringing in her ear. Of course, it was in her ear! Who ever heard of a voice ringing in one's heart? Particularly a voice that was rough and really insulting, even if it did have a funny little catch in it that made you know it was more used to humor and laughing than to sarcasm and anger.

The first thing when she got home—which had been home less than a week—Josephine studied her face in the mirror, and decided the man was right. She wasn't beautiful. She wouldn't have been beautiful without the cowlick above her right temple, that made her look—well, "pert" was the only name for it. And

for some absurd reason she had never before wanted so much to be beautiful. To prove to herself the man was wrong.

With some such idea in mind she had set about scrubbing the bathtub the minute she heard Esther's car leave the garage. As if scrubbing a bathtub, or even breaking a finger nail could prove anything. It wasn't likely she would ever see the man again. And if she did, he definitely wasn't her sort. His dark-blue shirt and bibless overalls marked him a farmer. His calloused hands, his sunburned face, and his shining black hair had looked as if he had stepped from under a shower just before coming to town. Funny, she should remember all these things about him, when she had seen him but once, and for such a very short time.

Suddenly, Josephine decided to go for a walk. Esther didn't approve of walking. That is, in slacks and shirt and an old straw hat, the like of which Lizzy had been wearing in the garden this very morning before she, Josephine, was supposed to be up.

So, Josephine borrowed the maid's clothes, which fit really well, crammed a sandwich into her pocket, and set out. She took a path that wound about and seemed to lead nowhere except over a wooded hill, across a little singing stream, into an open space, and back into the wood again.

She enjoyed it. The silence. The freedom. She had been gone perhaps ten minutes when she discovered she had worn no gloves, started back for them, and remembered a hateful, taunting voice:

"—a girl who could forget——"

Well, for to-day she would forget. Forget she must keep her hands lovely for the money they brought

in, and for William. She would forget William. She would most certainly forget that other man.

Then, she did forget him, for suddenly through an opening in the trees, she saw something that completely filled her mind. Odd she hadn't seen it before. It was in plain view—a picture in a green frame. She walked toward it, a two-story, beautifully dilapidated house with real honest-to-goodness shutters—not the little make-believe things so many of the new houses affected—and a huge fireplace chimney. A whitewashed picket fence, with now and then a picket leaning drunkenly toward its neighbor, or missing altogether, surrounded the half-kept yard. A colorfully ragged Negro pulled weeds from among flowers that bloomed amicably about the place: a phlox beside a larkspur, and larkspurs holding hands with zinnias and straw pinks, while the zinnias and pinks nodded to marigolds and gaillardias.

It was lovely. It was inviting. It made Josephine's heart ache with loneliness. All her life she had wanted such a place, and she had bought Sunnyfield, stiff and proper and terribly newish, for more than she could afford to pay for a country home.

The place improved the closer she came to it. Back of the picket fence was a house for chickens. Real farm chickens, no doubt; not just a few picturesque snow-white ones with shaggy legs. Somewhere about a rooster crowed. Josephine had thought roosters crowed only early in the morning. A pig squealed. Compared with this homy place Sunnyfield looked artificial; as William looked artificial compared with that farmer.

Suddenly things began to happen. Around the chicken house came a small, sandy-colored object. Or was it lightning? It darted through Josephine's legs and squealed on its way. Josephine threw a hand to either side of her face and screamed, the scream ending in "You!" For on the very tail of the little red pig, his brown hands almost grasping it, was the man who had been causing her turbulent thoughts.

"And you!" he said. Then: "Why the Sam Hill didn't you stop that pig?"

Josephine's heart, roaring in her ears, sounded like an airplane motor—from being startled, of course. It positively wasn't from seeing this man again. He was more insulting than he had been the day before. She stop a pig!

She glared at him.

"I—I couldn't," she said, and hated herself for making that inadequate reply.

"Huh. I wouldn't have thought it," the man said, as if he were glad it was true. "Besides having a cowlick, you're bow-legged."

"No!" she cried hotly. "I'm not." As if it mattered what he thought of her legs that were safely hidden beneath Lizzy's slacks.

"Knock-kneed?" he guessed, one eyebrow shooting upward. Then he grinned.

Josephine found herself grinning back. "Not much," she said, and they both laughed.

"Come on," he said. "Help me catch that runt."

Josephine did.

This man, of all people, she thought resentfully, lived here. He had no right to such an adorable place. It should belong to some one who would appreciate it, not to



just a common farmer who wore blue shirts and bibless overalls, and went about knocking girls down and—chasing pigs. This was brought to mind when he yelled:

"Hey, there! Quit dreaming and head him off!"

Determined not to let it go through her legs again—to prove to that hateful man she wasn't bow-legged—she lunged for the little red pig. She caught it, but at what cost! Her leg, she was sure, was broken. It was skinned and Lizzy's slacks irremediably torn. Her hands were covered with dirt and small lacerations. She had skidded on the chicken-yard gravel. A finger nail was broken!

Tears filled her eyes.

But she wasn't crying. She wasn't. Anyway, it was because she was angry and her leg hurt and her hands stung. It wasn't because she had broken a finger nail. It wasn't because this farmer person, whom she hated, looked down at her with humor and sympathy in his eyes. It wasn't because his eyes and his voice did things to her heart, because they didn't. She refused to let them. A person who was engaged to William had a right to say how blue eyes and sympathetic voices affected her heart.

"Gosh," the man said, "I'm sorry. The pig isn't worth it. He's only a runt."

"You're not sorry," she snapped. A prize pig would have been worth her injuries, but this one was only a runt! "You're glad. You wish I'd broken all my finger nails and skinned my face and broken my leg."

"Not your leg," said the man, "your neck! But since you didn't, you'd better come inside and let me fix you up."

"I'm all right," she replied. "I'm going home."

But she didn't. She went inside and sat in a split-bottom rocker while he washed her hands and knee with warm antiseptic water, and liberally applied iodine. Only when her hands were covered with the amber-colored stuff did she remember that William was coming for the weekend. Well, she thought defiantly, this was one time he would look at something besides her hands.

Then it was she saw William. Not William, of course, but a splendid likeness of him sitting on the mantel. The very likeness, in fact, that had looked reprovingly at her from her own dresser while she got into Lizzy's slacks and shirt. She wished she had heeded that look and stayed safely at Sunnyfield.

Only when the farmer had finished dabbing iodine on her hands, corked the bottle and set it on the mantel, and said, lifting down William's photograph, "Now that you're all smeared up, we might let my brother introduce us," did she realize she was staring at the photograph.

"Your—brother?" she gasped. Then he must be Philip. No wonder she had disliked him on sight. He was exactly what William had said.

"A throw-back," William had told her. "Uncouth. Crazy about the land, and all that foolishness. Raises chickens and pigs and things. Refused to come to our factory's fifth jubilee because he had an incubator coming off, or whatever incubators do. Imagine it?"

Josephine could imagine it now, looking at Philip smiling sardonically at William's photograph.

"Yes, my brother, William Galloway, manufacturer of 'Sure Gloss' nail polish. Surprised, aren't you,

that such a regal-looking guy is related to me? And he is as regal as he looks—and as dumb. Now, he's gone and got himself engaged to some dumb gal and is coming out here for the week-end. Of all places, why must she select this part of the country in which to buy a

summer home? And why must William come this week-end, when my turkeys are hatching?"

"Perhaps the girl will entertain him and leave you to your turkeys," Josephine replied, feeling all choked up. He should pay for that remark. Engaged to some dumb gal!



Josephine was angry because her leg hurt and her hands stung. Not because this farmer person's eyes and voice did things to her heart, because they didn't. She refused to let them. She hated him.

"If only she would," he said, setting the picture back on the mantel, "but she won't. Or William won't let her. This will be too good a chance for him to try to civilize me. He'll drag me to teas and dinners and dances, and if I don't go he'll bring this sweet bunch of dumbness here and I'll have to feed her, and feel like a bug under a microscope while she scrutinizes me and the house and the animals. Gosh!"

"You've never met the girl?" Josephine found breath to ask, for she must say something.

"No. But I know the kind William would choose. She'll have lovely hands and no brains. She couldn't have brains and love William."

Josephine gasped for breath. How he should pay for those remarks!

"You're to meet her?"

"To-night," said Philip, and there was positively no air in all the world for Josephine to breathe. "That was why I acted such a fool yesterday when I bumped into you, and you mentioned your finger nail. I suppose it's natural for a girl to hate breaking a finger nail. I hate breaking one, myself. But I'd just got the letter from William, and he'd said: 'Her hands are famous. She has the most beautiful finger nails in the world.' Not a word about the girl herself. But say, lady," Philip changed the subject suddenly; "you are a lady, aren't you? I mean grown up, even if that absurd cowlick does make you look twelve years old."

Another remark for which he should pay. "We'll forget the cowlick and my age," she said frostily, and he grinned.

"You must be older than I think or you wouldn't mind telling. However, I just remembered you haven't

told me who you are, and where you came from."

"Perhaps," said Josephine levelly, "I'm the girl your brother is engaged to."

Did Philip turn pale for just an instant, or was it an optical illusion? It must have been the latter, for he laughed boyishly.

"Not you. Too much sense. And look at your hands."

The Negro housekeeper stuck her bandanna-covered head in at the door. "Time tuh eat, Mistuh Philip."

"Just call me Jo," said Josephine, who had never been called Jo in her life. "And don't, for Heaven's sake, remind me of my hands."

The meal was a gay affair. Josephine, thinking of Philip being William's brother and how she was going to make him pay for this and that, had never found repartee so easy. And never had she tasted such fluffy biscuits, such delicious fried chicken and cream gravy and strawberry shortcake with thick yellow cream, as the old Negro woman set before them. She forgot her hands, and that she was engaged to William. She forgot to hate Philip. It was in the garden, afterward, sitting on a round bench with an elm-tree trunk for a lean-back that she remembered. It was when he said:

"You'd make a swell wife for a farmer. Your pert little face would be too cunning bent over a brooder full of baby chicks. Your hands would toughen up and get useful, too. I could tell by the way you caught that pig."

"Thanks," said Josephine. "I'd prefer being the dumb gal William's engaged to."

Philip thought that priceless. "Wouldn't William just love to hear that! William couldn't tolerate a girl with a cowlick. It would re-

mind him of a farm. Related ideas, you know. A farm would remind him of me, and he would like to forget me."

Why must he mention that detestable cowlick? Yes, she hated him more than she had before lunch. It was easier to hate on a full stomach.

"Oh, darn!" exclaimed Philip, before she could find a cutting reply. "That blamed pig's out again. We've got to catch it."

"Excuse me," said Josephine, springing up, "I've had enough pig for one day. I'm going home. You'd better fix the pen so it won't get out."

"Good advice. Next, I suppose you'll be telling me how to catch him."

"Well," she said, "if I had to do it often I'd figure out some way besides running him down. I'd try coaxing."

"Oh, yeah? Coax a pig? You're thinking of a dog."

"I would," declared Josephine. And then unaccountably: "I bet I could do it right now." The pig seemed a friendly little fellow no bigger than a house cat, rooting among the larkspurs.

Philip was amused. "I'll take your bet," he said. "The pig, against a kiss."

Josephine could have killed him. "I don't want your old pig," she said hotly. "What would I do with him?"

Philip laughed. "Build a pen that'd hold him. But don't catch him, if you'd rather not. You know, I'd kind of like that kiss. Being a man of the soil, and all, I've had only a few. Never one from a pert little girl with a cowlick."

"I hate you," she said. "I didn't make that silly bet. I'm going home."

"If you do," said Philip, "without paying me, the first time I meet you in town I'll collect."

"And I'll call the police."

"The police know me. I'll explain to them, and they'll understand. They are awfully understanding. Want to pay me now and get it over with?"

"No! I'd die first. Or catch that silly pig."

And she did catch it. It took an hour, scooting along on the ground most of the time with the sandwich she had put in her pocket for lunch, now mashed and soggy, held out enticingly. Several times she touched the little sandy-colored fellow, but always he darted away before she could get a firm hold on him. And all the time Philip Galloway sat on the garden bench and watched, amusement dancing in his dark-blue eyes. Once she threw the sandwich at the pig, but picked it up and threw it at Philip when he laughed and said he didn't think she was trying, but that it was all right with him. He hoped she failed, deliberately or otherwise.

Finally she caught the wiggling, squealing thing by hemming it in a corner, and took it triumphantly to Philip. But he wouldn't accept it.

"He's yours," said Philip. "But if you want to sell him, I'll give you a perfectly lovely kiss for him."

"You are hateful," said Josephine. "You're a common farmer. Good-by!" And she marched out the garden, around the beautifully dilapidated house and into the near-by wood, with as much dignity as was possible considering her torn clothes, and that she carried a twenty-pound pig.

The pig stopped squealing and nestled comfortably in Josephine's arms, grunting contentedly now and then. But there was nothing com-

fortable or contented about Josephine. She was tired; her hands and her leg hurt; she simply seethed with anger. She didn't know how she was going to face Esther or William, and she didn't know what she was going to do with that darned pig. She decided to give it to Arnold, the handy man. Let him keep it or kill it or do what he would, just so she never saw it again. But things didn't work out that way.

She came in at the side garden gate just as Esther got out of the car in front of the house, William taking the car and driving on. She got almost to the garage without Esther seeing her, but at her minute of success the pig took it into its head to squeal. Josephine squeezed, trying to shut off the noise, and increased the volume. Esther dashed around the house to investigate.

"Josephine!" she cried. For a long moment she could say no more. Then she exclaimed: "Where did you get that vile thing? Look at your hands? Your lovely hands. Thank goodness William has gone after his brother, who, it seems, lives on a farm somewhere near, and won't be back until we can fix you up somehow. Are you crazy? Put that filthy thing down this instant."

"It isn't a filthy thing," said Josephine, more surprised at her words than Esther. "It's a pig. A beautiful little runt pig. And I'm going to make a pen for it and feed it."

But Esther was gone. Almost instantly she was back, the handy man in tow.

"Take that thing away," she ordered. "Don't let it make that terrible noise again. Get into the house, Josephine. This instant. Into the bathtub."

"Not so fast," said Josephine,

holding onto the pig with a firmness that brought "that terrible noise" again. "Whose pig do you think this is, anyway? I paid an outlandish price for it, and right here it stays."

"You paid—— It stays—— You're crazy! Take it away, Arnold."

In the end Arnold did take it away, but to a box behind the garage where it was to be fed and bedded and cared for as a pig should be. Josephine didn't know about that, but Arnold said that he did. Esther didn't approve, but would have agreed to anything in order to get Josephine into the bathtub, and out, so that she and Lizzy might have all the time possible to make her presentable for William. Josephine had threatened to see him as she was.

While she was in the tub, scrubbing as she had never before had to scrub herself and somehow liking it in spite of the cuts and bruises; and while Lizzy and Esther did things to make her presentable, Josephine anticipated the evening. It would be fun seeing Philip's face when he found out she really was William's fiancée. And it would be fun, terrible, frightening fun, to see William when he bent over her hands. Usually he kissed them instead of her lips. In fact, he had kissed her lips very few times. Thinking of those times, she suddenly wondered what Philip's kiss would have been like, and her heart gave an unexpected ecstatic jump. Yes, it would be fun seeing Philip when he found out.

But she put off going down to meet him. Even after she heard Esther in the living room talking to him and William, she delayed going down. At the last minute she was frightened and didn't want to see the hurt, or cynical, or whatever



kind of look it would be, in Philip's eyes. Funny that she thought little about what William would say or do. William seemed of little importance to-night.

Finally she was on the stairs. Halfway down. She could see Esther and William in the living room, their backs to her, examining a small piece of blue pottery. Philip was at the radio. And such an enormous Philip he was in evening clothes, his glossy hair as black as

Philip stared at her for a long moment. "No," he said eventually. "No, this isn't your fiancée, William. This is the girl I've been telling you about. This is the girl I'm going to marry."

his coat. He turned and saw her, and their eyes locked. Something electric passed between them. Josephine later remembered it as a spring unwinding from about her heart, letting loose a suffocating energy. She wanted to rush straight into Philip's arms. She wanted to

laugh and to cry, and she had trouble with her breathing. Then Esther and William turned and she came the rest of the way down the stairs.

"Philip," said William, "this is my fiancée, Josephine Rucks."

Josephine didn't breathe. She couldn't. Why had she ever thought this would be fun? Why had she let herself be engaged to William? Why hadn't she told Philip all about it this afternoon? That hurt look on his face was tearing her heart out. If he didn't say something, if he didn't let her look away from his tortured eyes, she would be in his arms in a minute.

"No," he said eventually, letting her eyes go. "No, it isn't, William. This is the girl I've been telling you about. This is the girl I'm going to marry."

Silence. Stillness so great the ticking of Josephine's wrist watch sounded like the breaking up of stars. So great the beating of her heart could be heard around the world and back. So great that thoughts and looks beat about the room like a child with a toy drum. And in that silence, that terrible, noisy silence, Josephine saw what her life with William would be—ease, luxury, beauty, dullness, with Esther always in the background cautioning her to be careful with her lovely hands. And with Philip—work, her hands rough and calloused, useful; a beautifully dilapidated house in which to live and rest—and love. Pigs and chickens and turkeys about. And Philip. More than all the rest there would be Philip.

"So this is your brother," she said to William, making her decision quickly, while she had the strength. "He's so exactly what I expected, from what you've told me of him."

Turning to Philip she smiled. Then she looked at her hands, raised them to her forehead, pushing back her red-brown hair, following the cowlick. "And I'm going to marry you, am I?" she said. "Too bad I didn't know about it. I usually know whom I'm to marry. What did you decide about the blue vase, William? Is it genuine, or did Esther make a mistake?"

Dinner was announced then, and Josephine took William's arm. At the table she was gay. A gayness close to tears. She told William and Esther of her experience that day. Told it humorously, casting quick glances Philip's way, and delighted to see him flush with anger and embarrassment.

All through the meal she played with him as a cat plays with a mouse, tormenting instead of killing outright, and told herself she was making him pay as she had promised. When she decided he had suffered enough she said to William:

"I should like being married out here in the country. I think I'll set the date for next month."

"June, the month of romance," Philip remarked.

"Sure you can be ready in a month?" William asked solicitously, ignoring Philip's remark, as he had ignored Philip since those unexpected words in the living room. His serious face shone with happiness.

As ready as she would ever be, Josephine found herself thinking, and jerked herself up. "Yes, William," she answered him. "I think I'll like being married in June."

Philip didn't look altogether stricken as she had expected him to. His jaw did not move forward, but to offset that one eyebrow shot upward in that tricky way it did just before he smiled.

"The month you're married in has nothing to do with happiness," he said. "I knew a couple once who were——"

While he told of the couple he knew, Josephine nibbled at her dessert and named over all the advantages she would gain by marrying William.

Then dinner was over, and Josephine was astonished to find herself almost immediately in the garden with Philip. It had come about so easily that she hardly realized they were there alone, until he turned to face her under the stars. Then she wished frantically she were anywhere but there—and wouldn't have been anywhere else for all the world.

"You aren't going to marry William," he said. "You don't love him."

"What is love?" she answered, intending it to be flippant. But she couldn't be flippant with Philip's eyes boring right down into her heart and prying out her secret.

"This is," he said, and kissed her.

It did what she knew it would do. It turned her heart to jelly, and her resolutions to marry William for other things besides love to a thin

vapor that vanished entirely with the second kiss. With the third she knew that living on a farm and having calloused hands and helping with pigs and chickens and turkeys would be fun. Any hardship, so long as she was sharing it with Philip, would be.

"We must go in and tell William and Esther," she said later. "I dread telling them."

"I'd feel sorry for William if I weren't too happy to feel anything else. I've always been a disappointment to him. Now, I'll be a tragedy."

"Not for long," Josephine said with sarcasm and wisdom. "There are lots of lovely hands in the world. Esther is the one who will be hard hit. But I'll turn everything I have over to her. That will help."

Philip's eyebrow shot upward. Amusement spread over his tanned face. "Everything? Even the pig?"

"Unless you want it at the price I refused this afternoon."

While Esther and William discussed blue pottery and nail polish in the living room, Philip, under the stars and a ghost of a moon, bought back the little runt pig with a sweet, lingering kiss.



AROUND THE FLAME

AROUND a dancing flame I held my hands,
And felt a sudden warmth steal in my heart.
The little, icy bands of loneliness
That had so long been holding me apart
From all the love and happiness I craved,
Gave way before its fire, and then I knew
A sudden touch of breathless wonderment,
Because, my dear, the glowing flame was you!

CATHERINE E. BERRY.



The Dance Of Danger

By Fanny Locke Hatton

OVER the marquee of the great De Luxe Movie Theater Marilyn Duane's feature act was spelled out in huge letters as "Marilyn And Her Two Dare-Devs." Below, along the building wall, were pictures of Marilyn, young, beauti-

ful and already a headliner at twenty, and Leon Gomez and Fred Holland, her partners.

People were crowding into the house for the first evening show as back stage Leon Gomez was knocking at the door of Marilyn's dress-

ing room. His lounging robe of silk matched the stage costume beneath it—tight red-velvet trunks and heel-less shoes. A close-fitting red cap covered his head. As the robe swung open it showed his bare torso with the muscles rippling under smooth white skin. But Leon took his amazing good looks and superb physique as a matter of course. He had many failings, but vanity wasn't one of them. His only interest in life was to make Marilyn Duane his wife. As he stood waiting, his heart beat rapidly. Just the thought of her could do that to him. Sadie, Marilyn's colored maid, opened the door for him.

"Hello," he said affably. "Is Miss Duane ready to go on? I want to speak to her."

"Yes, Mr. Leon, she's dressed, only I don't know——"

Impatiently he pushed by the maid into the room. Marilyn was seated at the make-up table ready for her adagio number. Her graceful body was covered only by tiny, spangled trunks and a narrow brassière. Over her bronze hair was a scarlet cap that fitted as closely as an aviator's helmet. Her perfectly shaped legs were bare, and on her tiny feet she wore flat-heeled dancing slippers. Her lips and finger nails were tinted scarlet to match her costume. She was very lovely as she sat there, her large gray eyes, with long black lashes so heavy they needed no mascara, meeting his gaze wearily.

"Well, Leon," she asked, "what is it this time?"

His eyes dwelt on her with ill-concealed longing, his bold gaze wandering over her. She remembered that she did not have on a robe and flushed a little.

"Bring me my dressing gown, Sadie." She stood up as the maid

brought it to her, then slid her arms into the garment and wrapped it around her. Leon smiled at her with a dazzling flash of his white teeth. His face lighted up and made him look like a boy.

"Why?" he asked, softly, amused at her evident discomfort. She did not answer him and he went on: "May I speak to you—alone?"

Marilyn turned to the maid. "Wait outside a moment, Sadie. I'll call you when I want you."

When they were alone Leon came so close to her that his knee brushed hers. She pushed back her chair. She could not control the feeling that always swept over her when he touched her. His face reddened as he saw her shrink from him. His full lips narrowed ominously but he only said: "I suppose you want to know what's on my mind. It's this new baritone on the bill, Carey Bruce. I happen to know that he went to Martin, the stage manager, and asked for an introduction to you. Of course, Martin came to me."

Their eyes met, Leon's blazing with the feeling she always aroused in him, but her glance was cold and indifferent.

"And why," she asked, "should Martin go to you to find out if I wanted to meet Carey Bruce?"

"Because I'm your partner and he knows I'm crazy about you," Leon returned hotly. "I told him to inform Bruce you were too busy to meet strangers."

Marilyn sat up and stared at him, her face full of resentment. "Don't you think you're taking a good deal on yourself, Leon? I'm quite capable of deciding whether or not I care to meet a man without any dictation from you."

Her contempt maddened him. "I can't stand seeing other men around

you!" His voice shook with anger.

"You know how I feel," he continued. "I never look at another woman and you drive me crazy when you're so cold to me. Marilyn, why won't you listen? No one will ever adore you as I do."

He pulled her up out of the chair and drew her into his embrace. Her face grew white.

"Don't!" she gasped. "Let go of me, Leon! You know how I hate to be pawed!"

She pushed him away from her. Her slender, well-trained body had an amazing strength. Hurt and baffled, he dropped his arms. She looked at him a moment and then said: "I'm sorry, Leon, but I've told you so many times never to touch me except when we're working in the act. I don't want to be unkind, but you must let me alone."

"I'll never let you alone," he exclaimed. "How cruel you are, and all I've done is to love you!"

"But I don't love you," she answered, her hands clenching and unclenching nervously. "And you'd better pull yourself together. We go on in a few moments and we don't want any slip-up in the act."

His eyes blazed. "All you can think of is that dog-goned act! You're just a performer! You have no heart!"

He strode out the dressing room angrily, his head high. Marilyn's shoulders drooped and an expression of despair settled on her lovely face. It was always the same thing.

No matter how desperately she tried she could not overcome the feeling of repugnance when Leon touched her. She turned and noticed he had left the door open. As she heard voices she walked across to close the door and call Sadie. But the colored girl had wandered off. Standing in the hall she saw Dixie

Evans, one of the performers, talking to Carey Bruce. After Leon's tempestuous outburst the tall, blond baritone looked as cool and serene as a mountaintop. His eyes were clear and blue. His merry laugh, as he talked to Dixie, was contagious. And when he turned, as Dixie called to her, she realized he was as well-built as the two athletes with whom she danced, but not with the sleek, professional look that Leon and Fred cultivated. His broad shoulders and muscular body made her think of a husky young football player. Marilyn liked him at once, and hesitated in the doorway. She and Dixie were old friends. The latter greeted her warmly.

"Hello, honey. Mr. Bruce was just telling me he'd like very much to meet you, and you walk right out on the cue."

Carey's blue eyes met Marilyn's with warm admiration. He looked at her with great interest as Dixie introduced them. His voice was boyish and eager as he crossed over and took her hand in both of his.

"I certainly do want to meet you, Miss Duane," he said, "and tell you how much I admire your courage. I was watching your dance from the wings this afternoon and you almost gave me heart failure, I was so afraid you'd fall."

Marilyn smiled at him. "But I never fall," she assured him. "I've been an adagio dancer since I was ten years old."

"Just the same, it looks very dangerous," he went on, "and I don't think you should take such risks. And it's certainly hard work." His voice was full of concern. It sent a little wave of satisfaction over her.

Dixie broke in: "Of course, it's dangerous. Don't let her tell you it isn't. If she missed one of those long, flying leaps she'd probably



Leon's eyes dwelt on Marilyn with longing, his bold gaze wandering over her. She remembered that she did not have on a robe and flushed.

break her back. I just can't watch her do the act."

Marilyn looked up at Carey and his heart almost missed a beat. Her big, soft, gray eyes seemed to him to be filled with unrest and unhappiness. It made his heart ache. He wanted to protect her.

"You're terribly tired, aren't you?" he asked softly. His voice did things to her, it was so deep and caressing.

"Well, I have four performances a day, you know," she said.

She closed her eyes a second. A little shudder ran over her as the thought of Leon and her dance surged back into her mind.

Carey noticed her change of mood at once. "What is it?" he asked quickly. "What's wrong? Can I do anything?"

Dixie stared at him in amazement. What was happening to these two? But Marilyn realized that with some strange intuition he had sensed the despair in her heart. It frightened her. She had just met him and already he knew she was unhappy. She must pull herself together.

"Nothing's wrong," she said with forced gayety. "And I'll wait in the wings and listen to you when our act is over."

"Will you?" He was excited, eager. "Then I'll sing just for you."

Before she could answer him Sadie came down the corridor. "Most time, honey," she warned as she walked on into the dressing room. Marilyn, strangely moved, nodded and turned to the door. But Carey wasn't to be dismissed so easily. He followed her.

"Will you wait and tell me if you like my songs? Please do," he begged.

"Of course," she answered. "But I know I'll like them. I've often

heard you on the radio. Now I must go."

Carey sighed. "I suppose so, but I hate to let you out of my sight."

Dixie was utterly overcome. "Well," she said, "you don't lose much time, do you, Mr. Bruce?"

He laughed. "I've already lost too much!" Then he said softly to Marilyn: "I'll be in the wings while you're on. But when you make that terrible leap I'll close my eyes. Because now that I've met you I couldn't bear to watch it."

Marilyn drew Dixie into the dressing room with her and closed the door. Dixie was thrilled. "Isn't he a darling?" she cried. "I just adore that smooth, blond, virile type. What a smile—and what a voice! Oh, I could do a nose dive for him, but he doesn't know I'm on earth, he fell so hard for you! Didn't you like him, honey?"

"You know I did," Marilyn replied hopelessly. "He's different. But what good will it do me? In a moment I've got to go out there and let those two boys toss me about. I feel as if I couldn't go through with it to-day."

Marilyn dropped into the chair before the make-up table. There was a look on her face that alarmed Dixie.

"I'll bet it's Leon again," Dixie said, crossing to her. "Has he been talking to you?"

Marilyn nodded. "He was in here a little while ago and we had the usual scene."

Dixie scolded her friend briskly. "And now you have the jitters again, and you promised me you'd stop it. You know, if you keep this up you won't be able to do your act at all!"

Marilyn's voice was unsteady as she replied: "I can't help it. It comes over me like a big wave. I'm

afraid, I tell you—horribly afraid!"

"Of your act?" Dixie asked in surprise. "Why should you get nervous now after you've been doing it for so long? And those two boys are marvelous performers. They know their business."

"Oh, it's not the dance that makes me nervous. It's being thrown around, and handled!" Her eyes widened as she went on. "Don't you understand, Dixie, it's getting to be an obsession with me? I can't bear to have them touch me. It makes me sick inside." Then she added with meaning: "Especially Leon. When I feel his hands on me I want to scream. Sometimes I have to bite my lips to keep from doing it. And it's getting worse and worse. I don't know how much longer I can keep it up."

Again a shudder ran over Marilyn. Dixie sat down and lighted a cigarette. Sadie came over and shook her finger at Dixie behind Marilyn's back. "Now, Miss Dixie, you knows Miss Marilyn often gets this a way just before her dance. It don't mean nothin' at all. Only you should have better sense than to talk to her about Mr. Leon."

Dixie nodded to Sadie and motioned for her to leave them. "Listen, Sadie, be a good girl and stand outside the door. If that house fireman comes around give me the high sign. He can sniff a cigarette a block away."

When the two girls were alone the color began to creep back into Marilyn's face. She smiled at her friend.

"Don't worry about me, Dixie. I think the panic is over for to-day."

"That's better," Dixie commented, blowing smoke rings in the air. "It's just nerves, anyway. Only I wish you'd tell me one thing. Why do you keep on with this adagio business when it gets you down

this way? There are other kinds of dancing."

Marilyn answered with deep conviction. It was a matter to which she had given much thought. "But I love it! Flying through the air and leaping from one partner to another makes me feel so free and alive. I've been doing it ever since I was a kid and I've worked terribly hard to become a headliner."

"Sure you have, kid," Dixie admitted.

"And I can't give it up now when I'm making real money out of it," Marilyn continued. "It's only this last year that it's made me so nervous. It isn't so bad with Fred, but Leon is always making love to me—even on the stage!"

"Why don't you let him out and get another partner?" Dixie suggested. "It's your act, you know."

"But, Dixie, I can't let the best dancer I've ever had in the act go just because he wants to marry me. The booking office would laugh itself to death if an adagio star said she couldn't stand having her partners touch her! No, it's my fault and I've just got to get over it—or quit!"

"I suppose," Dixie asked, watching her closely, "you couldn't settle it all by marrying Leon? He's crazy about you and terribly handsome."

"Marry him?" Marilyn gasped. "I'd die first. I'm never going to marry any one. When I've saved up enough money I'm going to leave the stage. I'll take Sadie and live some place in the country where no man will ever come near me!"

Sadie rapped sharply on the door. "Time for you to go on, Miss Marilyn," she called in.

Marilyn rose quickly and hurried out to the corridor and down to the stage where she stood in the first entrance at the right side waiting for

her cue. Across in the opposite entrance were Leon and Fred. They would enter before she did. A Japanese group was just finishing its act.

From where she stood she could glimpse a corner of the great movie house rising up, cathedrallike, to dim heights from which came shafts of light to illuminate the stage. Out there sat several thousand people, rapt and silent in tiers of seats which rose like the walls of a man-made Grand Canyon. She could only see the people in the front rows at one side, but she could feel all the others, hungry for thrills, eager for anything that would rescue them from the moment from boredom, the emptiness of their lives, the cares that haunted their minds.

As the other act came off, the music changed to the adagio melody and Leon and Fred entered, bare to the waist, their white skins set off by the scarlet caps and trunks. They began to do a bit of balancing and tumbling to show off their magnificently developed bodies.

Marilyn sensed some one behind her in the entrance and turned to see Carey Bruce.

"Please be very careful," he whispered. "I'm frightened even before you begin."

It made her happy to think that he was anxious about her safety. "Don't worry," she assured him. "I'll be back here soon and watch you do your stuff."

He looked out to the stage and commented: "Those boys are well built, especially Leon. Do you like him particularly?"

Her eyes met his. "I loathe him!" Her voice was tense. "But he's a good partner and that's all he means to me."

Before he could reply Marilyn's cue came. As she streaked across

the stage in a swift flash of scarlet-and-white Leon's back was to her. She launched herself into an arrow-like flying leap, head-on. A wave of sound broke from the audience—a subdued gasp of terror. Without even turning Leon caught her over his shoulder, slid her down before him grasping one wrist and ankle, and then swung her out wide as he whirled rapidly. Then she was thrown abruptly to Fred. Through the whole routine of the act never did the continuity of Marilyn's movement cease. It was all definite grace, as if a symmetrical human body had been endowed with the motions of a swallow.

As she was swinging about on Leon's shoulders for a moment he muttered: "That darned baritone is standing in the entrance!"

"Yes," she came back in a low tone, "I asked him to watch the act."

Then, as he was raising her above his head he cut in: "So you've met him?" With this he grasped her thigh so roughly that she almost cried out. She knew it meant an ugly bruise. Tears came into her eyes with the pain. No one knew better than Leon how delicate her skin was. Always before he had taken the greatest care in the way he grasped her. And now because he was jealous he became reckless. She answered him quickly, her voice low but resentful: "I not only met him—I like him!"

Leon almost snarled as he threw her across savagely to Fred. Then the men worked through to the finish, both grasping Marilyn by wrists and ankles and swinging her over rapidly, again and again. Then dropping her to her feet between them as they took their bows to enthusiastic applause.

As Marilyn ran off Carey and

Sadie were waiting for her in the entrance. Before the colored girl could throw the wrap around Marilyn they both had seen the angry mark on her white thigh.

"You were marvelous!" Carey exclaimed. "But you've been hurt." There was anxiety in his voice. "That Leon is a brute!"

Marilyn shook her head. She was too proud to admit that her partner had deliberately hurt her.

"He couldn't help it," she said evasively. "It's nothing, really, only every mark shows up so plainly on my skin."

But in her heart she knew too well that Leon's jealousy had found its revenge in hurting her. Sadie knew it, too, for her face was full of indignation as Leon and Fred came around from the back of the set.

The girls of the chorus now had the stage for a brief interval before Carey's entrance. Leon came up to Marilyn, full of protestations.

"Sorry, darling," he said with a possessive look which did not escape Carey. "But I had hold of you at the wrong angle. I had to hang on or drop you. You know how careful I always am about that velvet skin of yours."

His intimate tone made the girl flush and Carey yearned to hit him, but Marilyn passed it off lightly.

"Coming?" Leon inquired as he got into his dressing gown.

"No," Marilyn replied. "I'm watching Mr. Bruce's number from here."

Leon's face darkened as he said curtly: "Oh, so that's how it is. I'll see you later."

After he had gone Sadie brought Marilyn a chair. Carey leaned over her.

"That Leon's in love with you," he murmured.

Marilyn sighed wearily. "He doesn't know what love is. There's your cue."

"Remember," he said as he started for the stage, "I'm singing just for you."

As Marilyn listened to Carey's deep, rich voice with its tender, caressing quality there seemed to be a sort of magic in the songs. She felt as if she could listen to him forever. He was a big hit with the audience, and when he came off Marilyn told him that he had sung gloriously.

"Don't you know why?" he asked, as they walked back to her dressing room.

His eyes gave a warm glow over her as he lingered at the door. "Will you have supper with me after the last show? We'll go to some quiet place. There's so much I want to tell you. Or will Leon object?" His tone was light, but Marilyn knew what he was thinking.

"I do not ask Leon what I may do," she replied a little coldly.

"Please," he begged. "I had no right to say that. I'm jealous."

He was so sincere and boyish she couldn't resist the sudden impulse that came over her. "I have a small apartment in town where Sadie and





When Marilyn left with Carey, she did not see Leon waiting in the shadow. He watched them drive off, his handsome face distorted with jealous rage.

I live between road engagements. Suppose you come home with me and Sadie will cook supper for us. How would you like that?"

"Better than anything in the world! I'll be waiting for you."

Marilyn found the colored girl in a rage when she entered her dress-

ing room. "That Leon bruise you up that a way on purpose. Somebody ought to beat that ape!"

But Leon was gentleness itself during the next show and full of remorse and regret. He almost convinced Marilyn that it had been an accident. But when she got into the taxi later with Carey and Sadie, she did not see Leon waiting in the shadow as they went along the alley leading from the stage door. He watched them drive off, his handsome face distorted with jealous rage.

When they reached Marilyn's apartment she went to her room to change. Sadie and Carey discussed the all-important question of supper. The colored girl was highly pleased to have him there.

"Does you like scrambled eggs and little pig sausages, Mr. Bruce?" she asked. "And waffles with maple sirup?"

Carey sat on the couch and grinned at her delightedly. "Do I?" he exclaimed. "Just watch me stow 'em away. And see you make plenty of those waffles."

"Yes suh, and I makes 'em good!" Sadie went off to the kitchen, chuckling. Marilyn came back looking more beautiful than ever in black velvet lounging pajamas and tiny gold sandals, her soft hair a frame about her wistful face. As she sat down on the couch by Carey her nearness and the delicate perfume she used went to his head.

"You're so lovely and sweet," he murmured. "And it's so wonderful to be here with you like this." But he did not try to touch her, and his eyes were not demanding.

"I like it, too," Marilyn confessed. "Do you know, you're the first man who has ever been here alone. I suppose it's silly, but men usually frighten me."

He leaned his head back and spoke softly. "What have other men done to make you feel that way? A man who cared for you ought to spend his life protecting you and keeping all the ugly things away from you. Why do men frighten you, dear?"

Before Marilyn knew it she found herself pouring out her heart to him. "They always want to kiss me and take me in their arms, and it makes me feel faint and sick to be touched. Perhaps it's because of all the handling I have to endure while I'm doing my adagio. But each time before I go on I get absolutely ill at the thought of it. And when Leon has me in his arms during the dance"—she shuddered—"it almost kills me. I've tried and tried to get over it, but I can't. It only gets worse. It frightens me to be alone with a man for fear he will touch me."

A great wave of tenderness swept over Carey as he looked into her wistful face. He longed to gather her close and comfort her, but he knew that would be fatal.

"You poor, blessed baby," he said softly. "How hard it's all been for you. And what a plucky child you are to go on when you feel that way."

"Then you really understand. You don't think I'm silly?" she asked anxiously. "You see, no one else has ever understood. I don't want to feel that way, but that awful fear is stronger than my will."

"Listen, dear," he said gently. "Can't you believe a man could love you enough not to touch you until you wanted him to?"

"I don't know what you mean," she whispered.

He did not even take her hand. Only his voice caressed her. "I mean, I am that man and I love you so much that I'll wait forever."

The first moment I saw you I knew I was yours for all time. But you mustn't ever be afraid of me, sweet. I'll never do anything you don't want me to do. Will you trust me? And let me teach you to care for me? I want you for my wife, darling."

Marilyn looked at him, startled. And wondered why she did not shrink away from him. Instead she felt utterly secure and at peace. No man had ever made love to her like this, so sweetly and quietly. And despite the longing in his face he made no move to touch her. She tried to make him understand, her face earnest, her big eyes looking into his.

"I'm proud to have you tell me that, Carey, but I'm never going to marry. It wouldn't be fair to you or any other man when I feel this way. A man doesn't want a wife who is just a pal to him."

"I want you any way you will come to me, dear."

She shook her head. "No, Carey, I couldn't. I like you more than any man I've ever met, and I trust you. But we can only be friends, ever."

He smiled at her. "I'll wait, sweet. Perhaps you won't always feel that way. And for the present we're just friends. Is that a bargain?"

She put out her hand impulsively. He took it in his and turned it over. "May I put one kiss on it, just for luck?"

Marilyn hesitated, but after all, why should she refuse him that small request? She nodded assent. Then his lips sought the soft palm of her hand and he kissed it gently, tenderly. Marilyn waited for the sick feeling that always overwhelmed her, but it didn't come.

"Was it so terrible?" he asked softly.

"No," she answered frankly. "It wasn't terrible at all." Then they both laughed like two children. Marilyn felt young and happy. And Carey determined grimly to hold his feelings in check at any cost. But it was growing harder each second not to grab Marilyn and kiss her wildly, so he actually welcomed Sadie as she poked her head around the door and announced: "Come on, while these eggs and waffles and sausages is hot."

While they did justice to Sadie's cooking Leon stood outside across the street, white with rage, as he watched to see when Carey would leave.

The next day, Saturday, and the final performances of their engagement at the De Luxe, Leon saw Marilyn come in with Carey after lunch and knew he was waiting for her in the wings after each show. When they went on for their last adagio turn that night Leon was almost crazy with jealousy. Even Fred noticed the state he was in and warned him to be careful.

Marilyn was not even thinking of Leon until suddenly near the end of the dance she happened to look at him and saw the insane blaze in his eyes. As he passed her over his head she could feel the tense rigidity in his arched, straining muscles. Suddenly she was filled with a nameless, shuddering terror. "Careful, Leon," she whispered. He gave a short, ugly laugh as he started their long swing, grasping her by one ankle and one wrist. She knew what was in his mind and tried to stop him, but he was too strong for her. Something of the conflict between them seemed to pass out to the audience; it was so tense and still one could hear people breathe.

Round and round Leon whirled her, his grasp like iron, his strong legs moving like pistons. Suddenly, at full swing, her wrist slipped from his hand and she went hurtling out over the footlights, her body crashing into the orchestra pit, her fall partly broken as she struck one of the musicians. She landed with her right leg doubled under her. When they picked her up and carried her under the stage she was unconscious. The curtain was rung down hastily.

Up on the stage Leon had collapsed in Fred's arms. He was shaking like a leaf as he muttered wildly that Marilyn had slipped from his grasp, that it was an accident.

Marilyn was carried up to her dressing room and placed on the couch, her eyes fluttering. Sadie stood by, tears streaming down her face. A doctor recruited from the audience was bending over the injured girl, trying to see how badly she had been hurt. When Carey came out to the wings ready to go on he found the stage in wild confusion. "What's the matter? Am I late?" he asked. "Is the adagio number over?"

"I guess it's over for good," some one answered. "Miss Duane's partner let her fall out over the footlights. She's in her dressing room and I heard them telephoning for an ambulance."

Carey, his heart turning over with fear, started to rush off to Marilyn but the stage manager stopped him. "You'll have to go right along with your number, Mr. Bruce. You know, the show must go on." And he was literally pushed onto the stage to struggle through his songs.

Back in the dressing room Marilyn was now conscious, the doctor telling her that her right leg was badly injured. Her knee was ter-

ribly swollen and the pain was intense.

"I can't tell you how badly you're hurt until we get some X rays," the doctor explained. "But we'll soon find out at the hospital."

Marilyn objected vigorously. "I'm not going to a hospital," she said. "If I have to be laid up I want to be at home. Send a nurse with me to my apartment and have an X-ray machine brought up there to-night."

People from other acts tried to crowd in, but Sadie let only Dixie enter. She knelt down by Marilyn and wept. But in spite of her pain Marilyn had plenty of courage.

"Don't cry, Dixie," she said faintly. "I'm not dead yet."

"It's so terrible," Dixie sobbed. "Leon is frantic and poor Carey's out there singing. They made him go on."

But when the ambulance came Carey rode by her side, smiling encouragement at her. The rest of that night and the next morning were to Marilyn a confused, painful blur of doctors and nurses and X rays, but through it all Carey never left her. After the doctor had given her a hypodermic to make her sleep Carey dozed on the sofa in the living room. Sadie couldn't make him leave.

By Sunday afternoon Marilyn was awake, though still in pain. She took heart when the famous surgeon, who had been called in for consultation, told her she would recover fully in time.

"You mean I'll be able to dance again?" she asked anxiously.

"Of course," he assured her, "but it will be some weeks before your leg is strong."

Then Dixie was allowed to come in. She told Marilyn that Leon and Fred were to fill out the bookings with another adagio dancer Fred

knew. Then she leaned close to Marilyn.

"I believe Leon dropped you because of Carey," she said. "Of course, every one says it was an accident, but I know better."

Marilyn's eyes met Dixie's. "It's our secret, Dixie. If Carey knew, he'd kill Leon. I'm going to put him and his jealousy out of my mind forever."

"And speaking of Carey," Dixie went on, "suppose you see that poor boy. He's a wreck worrying about you."

Marilyn nodded.

"Of course, I'll see him the moment he comes."

"Comes?" Dixie laughed. "Darling, he's never left. He's been out in the living room all night and he's there now. I'll send him in."

When Carey walked in, Marilyn hardly knew him, his face was so haggard and his fair, smooth hair so disheveled. He sat down on the bed and devoured her with his eyes. She looked so little and white and sweet in her pink satin nightgown, her arms bare, her big eyes full of pain.

"Hello," she said softly. "I hear you've been here all night. What do you suppose people will say?"

Carey tried to laugh, but he couldn't. He choked instead and his eyes filled with tears. "Sweetheart, my own little girl," he murmured brokenly. "I've been to hell and back since yesterday, but the doctor says you'll soon be all right again. So I'm breathing once more. Tell me"—he leaned closer—"you like me, don't you?"

"You know I do, Carey. Better than any man I've ever known. I'll miss you terribly when you go away."

"But that's just it. I don't want to go away. I want to be with you



and take care of you. Will you make a bargain with me?"

LS-2E



Round and round Leon whirled her. Suddenly, at full swing, her wrist slipped from his hand and she went hurtling out over the footlights, her body crashing into the orchestra pit.

"What kind of bargain?" she asked.

His face was very grave and his voice full of tenderness as he told her: "I want you to marry me so I can be with you every moment. We'll just be two good pals. I don't expect anything else. I know just how you feel and I promise you I'll never forget. Won't you, darling? Just to make me happy?"

"But you wouldn't be happy. You ought to have a real wife, Carey, not a girl who is afraid to live. I couldn't let you do that."

"Listen, sweet," he said earnestly. "When you lay there so white and still I knew I'd rather have you just to look at than any other girl who would give me all the caresses in the world. I won't take 'No' for an answer. When you can travel I want to take you and Sadie to Hollywood. I have a splendid contract waiting for me there, and when you're strong and able to dance again I won't try to stop you."

"It sounds heavenly," she said, "but it wouldn't be fair to you. No man could love a girl enough to do that."

But he finally persuaded her, and against her own judgment Marilyn consented. The next day Carey got a license and found an old clergyman he knew, and Marilyn was married in a white satin and lace negligee with a tiny Dutch lace cap over her shining hair. Carey had sent her a huge bouquet of lilies of the valley. As she sat up in bed behind the flowers and made her wedding vows gravely, she looked so beautiful that Carey was beside himself with pride.

At the end of two weeks Marilyn didn't know how she had ever gotten along without Carey, he was so devoted, so thoughtful, the most

marvelous pal a girl could have. He had sent up a handsome daybed to put in the living room and insisted on sleeping there. Marilyn's leg was getting better daily and she could hobble a few steps. But she kept that a secret until she could surprise Carey by really walking.

Then one evening after he had said good night to her she decided she wanted to speak to him. She limped to the door and opened it only to find he wasn't there. He had gone out so quietly she had not heard him. Suddenly she found herself filled with a wild, unreasoning jealousy. Where was he? He knew a lot of people. Perhaps he had gone to see some other woman. Perhaps she was in his arms, giving him the kisses she, herself, had denied him. Marilyn went back to her room and threw herself on the bed.

Then something that had been frozen up in her seemed to melt and her heart beat madly. "I love him," she cried aloud. "He's mine and I want him! And he isn't here! Perhaps he's gone out a lot of other nights!"

Then she heard the front door open and Carey tiptoe into the living room. The light in her room was not on so he did not notice that her door was ajar. She sat up and listened breathlessly as he moved about quietly.

Carey was very unhappy. To have Marilyn for his wife and yet not to be able to show her how he loved her was making him utterly miserable. Sometimes he felt he could not endure it another day, but he had promised and he must keep his word at any cost. He took off his coat, put on a dressing gown and sat down on the couch, his head in his hands, every nerve in his body reaching out for the girl who was so

near him, and yet so far away. Suddenly he heard a soft voice say, "Carey," and he looked up to see Marilyn in the doorway of her room. Carey jumped up.

"What—what is it?" he stammered. "I just went out to get some cigarettes. Did you want something?"

His hungry eyes drank in her loveliness; his arms longed for her so that he thrust his hands deep into the pockets of the dressing gown.

"I want you," Marilyn said, as she limped over to him. Still he didn't believe it. Then she put her soft young arms around his neck and looked up at him as she had never looked at him before. "Put your arms around me, Carey, and hold me tight, and give me all those kisses I said I didn't want." But he did not touch her, only his eyes burned into hers.

"Do you mean it, sweet? It isn't just pity? Because if I touched you and you shrank away from me I couldn't stand it. I warn you, if I begin to make love to you I won't stop." His voice was hoarse with emotion. Marilyn's arms tightened about his neck.

"Carey, darling," she cried passionately, "can't you see I love you! Don't you want me any more?"

"Want you?" he burst out. He crushed her into his arms and held her so tight she could hardly breathe, but she gloried in the hurt of it. Then he kissed her with all the pent-up longing that had been stored in his heart—hot, starved kisses that swept her into an ecstasy of happiness. She looked up at him. He was too moved to speak.

"Oh, Carey," she cried, "I adore being kissed by you. Why didn't you do it long ago?"



MID-WINTER

LET'S build a jolly, crackling fire
With flames and shadows mounting higher;
We'll curl up in our cozy nook
With a fascinating book.

By the lamp's warm, rosy glow,
Oblivious of wind and snow,
We'll travel to the Orient
Or under palms we'll pitch our tent.

No matter what the place or weather,
We'll be happy, if together;
We'll make our life's long, cherished span
One short, congenial caravan.

FRANCES I. SHINN.



Little Heartbreaker

By Dorothy Ainsworth

DIXIE LOVELL watched the water trickling down her bare ankle. It was a very nice ankle indeed, she decided critically, before gloom again encompassed her. Shifting uncomfortably on the hot, sun-baked ground Dixie transferred her gaze to the lazily moving river while she listened to the high-school chimes in the distance. Five

o'clock, and here she was two miles from home clad in a wet pink slip!

Dixie bit a luscious lower lip, her blue eyes smoldering with resentment. It was all Jessica's fault, acting so nasty about the family car. If she could have driven out to the gypsy camp, she wouldn't have gotten so warm and tired. She wouldn't have taken the dip in the river. Her

dress would not have been stolen.

Now, some one at Marie's dinner, where she was due in less than two hours, would be sure to have heard of her predicament—you had to expect that in a suburban town the size of Denton. And what was almost as bad, Pamela Parker would know that she had been out to the camp to have her fortune told. She could just hear Pamela saying: "Don't tell me you're worrying about the future, darling! Has Jessica been stealing some more of your boy friends?"

Pamela certainly got in your hair. She would be shooting in the dark

this time, but she would be "warm." There was a man. Old Doctor Matthews's nephew from Boston. Neither Pamela nor Jessica nor Dixie had seen him in the flesh, but his picture had been in the *Denton Weekly News*, and every time Dixie looked at it her heart went into a rhumba.

His name was Kim North—Doctor Kim North—and the crowd was to meet him at Marie's dinner party to-night. The thought of her new hyacinth-blue chiffon dress cheered Dixie but momentarily. If she did get home in time to wear it, it would be expecting too much to have Kim



Dixie was furious. Here she was two miles from home clad only in a wet pink slip! Then she saw a young man fishing. "I'll give you a dollar to drive me home," she called. Startled, the stranger turned.

North prove immune to Jessica's charms. Practically every eligible male in town had at some time or another been in love with her sister, Dixie reflected bitterly. There was small comfort in the fact that Jessica, who was twenty-five now, seemed to be concentrating on Carlton Drake at last—Jessica always could find standing room in her heart for one more man.

Dixie ran experimental hands over the upper part of her slip. It was still in the clinging stage, but she would have to start thumbing her way back to town if she was to have anywhere near the amount of time she wanted for beautifying. She reached for her stockings.

An obscure sound, a sort of *whir-r-r* which she had not been able to label, came more distinctly now. Turning her head in its direction, Dixie saw a tall young man in a faded khaki shirt and disreputable-looking breeches slowly round the left point of the same cove where she was sitting. He was fishing from the shore. As she watched, his reel sang, and the fish line plopped noisily into the water.

Being something of a fisherman herself, Dixie grinned. His casting branded him a beginner, and anybody living in Denton knew you couldn't catch a thing from the shore. He was, in all probability, some tourist who had been attracted to the river as he drove past. There had been a car parked near the gypsy camp, she remembered. One with an out-of-town license. It was the recollection of transportation so near at hand that furnished Dixie with an inspiration.

"I'll give you a dollar to drive me to Denton," she called.

Startled in the act of casting again, the stranger turned. Something went whirring through the air

and caught painfully in her arm. Dixie screamed faintly as she looked down at the fishhook.

"Gosh!" cried the fisherman, dropping his rod. "Gosh, but I'm sorry. Terribly sorry. Wait, I'll take it out for you."

"Oh, I'll wait all right," Dixie assured him with a ghost of a giggle. What she could see of his face under a battered felt hat looked promising. But while his long legs brought him to her side she shut her eyes, because her arm hurt so much the river and the world in general were blurring and running together.

She closed them even tighter when she heard the blade of his knife snap open, but he only used it to snip the fish line close to the hook.

"Didn't go in very deep," he said. "Hurts like the dickens though, doesn't it? Shall I take it out now, or do you want to drive in to my office? I'm a doctor. Doctor North."

Dixie's blue eyes flew open in horror. She gulped, and glanced down at the clinging slip. "I guess you'd better take it out—now," she said.

"Sure you'll be all right while I get my first-aid kit out of the car? Sit with your head between your knees if you feel faint."

"Faint!" Dixie wailed to herself. "A lot of good fainting would do me. What I need is a nice little hole to crawl into and die. Of all the awful breaks—meeting Kim North looking like this!"

"Where's your dress?" he asked as he bandaged her arm after the short, painful operation. "Can you get into it by yourself?"

"I haven't a dress," Dixie said unhappily. Pulling on her stockings she rolled them at the ankle and slipped on her shoes.

Kim North quirked an amused

eyebrow. "Don't insult my intelligence. It insults easily."

"Somebody—one of the gypsies, most likely—stole it along with my hat while I went in for a dip. That's why I offered you a dollar to drive me back to town."

He helped her to her feet. "No use in my trying to collect that dollar bus fare now, I suppose." He had an endearing grin. "It's going to be as rotten a pun as I'm a fisherman, but I can't resist saying it—I caught the girl, but not her name."

Dixie fluttered her eyes at him. "I'm Dixie Lovell. And we're both due at a dinner in your honor in such a little while that it isn't funny."

"Lovell," he repeated, picking up his fish pole. "Now I get it! You're one of those sisters I've been warned about."

"That lamb of an old Doctor Matthews!" Dixie thought gratefully. "Jessica is the only menace. It was sweet of him to include me."

Kim was saying: "And forewarned is forearmed. I'm begging you not to break my heart, young lady. I have a——"

"—heart that breaks easily," Dixie finished, a dimple lurking in her cheek. "All of which is very sad, but we really must be going."

There was, fortunately, a raincoat in his car. Lost in its bulk, Kim delivered her at the Lovells' back door. Reluctantly, she climbed out of the coupé, a warm, singing feeling around her heart. Kim liked her. Really liked her, she could tell. He thought she was a darn good sport—he'd said so. Dixie wished that he wouldn't be meeting Jessica quite so soon. She glanced at the kitchen clock as she scooted past it. There was an hour in which to glorify herself.

Upstairs, she found Jessica already dressed, looking like an angel

in white. She was spraying her dark hair extravagantly with her younger sister's best perfume. But Dixie refused to be annoyed.

"Hm-m-m. You look gorgeous," she flattered, wriggling out of Kim's raincoat. "You positively do, Jess."

Her sister stared at her with suspicion. "Which means, I suppose, that you want to borrow something of money for to-night."

Dixie turned on the water in the bathtub and dashed back again. "No, no, a thousand times no," she warbled. "Listen, Jes, are you going to marry Carlton? He really is a lamb."

Jessica rummaged through Dixie's handkerchiefs. "I think I'll use this one with the duchess lace."

Dixie smothered a sigh. "Oh, help yourself," she said magnanimously, and peeled off her stockings. "But about Carlton—he has asked you to marry him, hasn't he?"

Jessica compressed her lips into a thin crimson line. "I wish," she snapped, "that you'd mind your own business."

Alone, Dixie dove into the closet and unearthed a bottle of violet-scented bath salts from the hat box in which she had hidden it. But the rosy glow of happiness which had suffused her was only mildly pink now. Jessica had either quarreled again with Carlton, or Carlton hadn't asked her to marry him. It didn't take a master mind to figure that out. And that meant Jessica would be in her most dangerous mood when she met Kim to-night.

Intent on the seriousness of the situation, Dixie forgot to look for signs of sunburn. But under the towel her shoulders and arms felt unduly tender. Worse yet, the bathroom mirror reflected a pink nose. She worked frantically with

creams and lotions and powder for as long as she dared.

Her thick, honey-colored hair she dressed the new way which she had been practicing for days. Parted in the middle, with just a suggestion of a ripple on one side, and a fat, glistening coil flat over the other ear. Prayerfully, she slipped the hyacinth-blue chiffon over her head. Throwing a kiss to her reflection in the mirror, Dixie snatched up her white taffeta cape and a diminutive seed-pearl evening bag.

Marie lived next door to old Doctor Matthews and his wife, which gave her a perfectly legitimate reason for being the one to introduce their nephew to the crowd, but she probably thought it also gave her a sort of option on him, too, Dixie told herself, as she hurried to the Atwells' house.

Dixie had anticipated the furor that her knowing the guest of honor would cause. And, of course, she was right. Marie's kitten-blue eyes widened. Pamela Parker's mouth sagged with amazement. Jessica's look bespoke volumes.

Katie, the Atwells' maid, was just serving the dessert course when Mrs. Matthews ran in from next door. The little Bratton girl had fallen out of the hayloft, she said, and had hurt her head. They wanted some one to come at once, and Doctor Matthews was on a case which would keep him most of the night.

Kim shoved back his chair. "I'll go, Aunt Vina. You understand, don't you, Marie?"

"And I'll go along to show you the way," Dixie suggested brightly. "You may have learned your way around Denton in two days, but the Brattons live on a back road. You could never find it by yourself. Particularly at night."

"Dixie certainly knows her back

roads—at night," Pamela drawled. "She probably couldn't find the Bratton place herself in the daytime."

During the general laugh which followed, Kim and Dixie left. Settling herself beside him in the coupé, Dixie gave silent thanks for this opportunity to be alone with him. She wanted to stretch the evening like an elastic band, make it include as much time as possible with Kim.

She was greedy to learn all that she could about him. His interne work in Baltimore. His ambitions. He told her that while it was not generally known, he and his uncle were planning to open a small, private hospital in Denton. Probably in the old McGregor mansion, Kim said. Its very isolation made it an ideal location. Meanwhile, he would be taking over Doctor Matthews's office practice and most of the house calls within a week or so. His uncle wanted him to play around for a few days, but he himself was anxious to buckle down to work.

Dixie smiled ruefully into the darkness. Even if Jessica couldn't manage to annex him, it didn't sound as though he would have much time left for her.

When Kim went into the Bratton farmhouse, Dixie curled up on the seat and tried to map out a campaign by which she might hope to hold Kim's interest in the face of competition. He was back before she had gotten very far, her planning being sidetracked by thought of Kim, himself, his trick of quirkiness, his left eyebrow, the clean, forceful line of his chin, his voice, his laugh.

"Flirting with the man in the moon?" he teased, dropping his kit into the car.

"How can I when there isn't a man?" she answered pertly.

Kim's shoulder brushed hers as

he got into the car. There should be mufflers for heartbeats, the same as there are mufflers for motors, Dixie thought, listening to her own noisy ones.

"And that's the only reason you aren't, I'll bet." His voice sounded a trifle grim. He lighted a cigarette, and started the car down the rough side road. "Say, what's the feud between you and the girl in the pink dress? The one who made the crack about your knowing the way through the sticks."

"Pamela Parker? Oh, she used to like a boy who—well, liked me."

"Who still likes you?" Kim suggested. The coupé had reached the main road again. "The young lady didn't act as though it was a matter of ancient history."

"Pamela can have him back with love and kisses," Dixie asserted. She didn't intend that Kim should think any one had a first mortgage on her.

"Little heartbreaker, aren't you? Little love 'em and leave 'em?" He pulled over to the side of the road and tossed away his cigarette. "Mind if I borrow this for a while?" He reached for her hand.

"I—I don't think a heart is anything for a girl to trifle with," Dixie said. Her own was doing erratic things. And because that sounded so sentimental she added hastily: "Of course, flirting is something different. That's the way a girl really shops for a husband. If she likes him, likes his kisses—"

Kim tightened his hold on her fingers. "So you kiss all the boys?" he asked.

She didn't. But if he had any Heaven-sent notion about kissing her, she didn't intend to spoil things. "After all, what's a kiss be-

tween friends?" she said as nonchalantly as she could manage.

A firefly darted past the open car window, like an exquisite moment taking wings. Kim pulled her to him and kissed her roughly, brutally. Then, with almost a gesture of flinging her from him, he withdrew his arm and started the car. Dixie stiffened with shock.

"We'd better be getting back," he said. "I'm probably boring you."

"Good-looking men never bore me." It was a steal from Jessica's line, but this was no time in which to trust to her own, Dixie decided.

They rode in silence, Kim's foot clamped down on the gas, the lights of the car cleaving the darkness like a bright arrow. Dixie stole anxious glances at his indistinct profile. Somehow, she had muffed things back there.

"Kim—" she began uncertainly. But either he did not hear, or else he pretended not to. Hurt, humiliated, she crowded against the side of the car.

They caught a red traffic light on the boulevard, half a block from Dixie's home. She opened the door of the car and slid out.

"You can tell the crowd anything you like when you get back to Marie's," she said. "This is as far as I go. Thanks for a large—and educational evening, Doctor North!"

"Dixie—" Kim called after her.

But she fled. Her mother and father were playing bridge on the screened-in porch of neighbors two doors away. By keeping close to the lilac bushes that bordered the flagstone walk, she managed to reach the Lovell entrance without their seeing her.



The telephone began to ring before she had taken off her dress. It was still ringing when she climbed into bed. Dixie plugged her ears with her fingers and let it ring.

If Kim hadn't really wanted to kiss her, why had he bothered to? Had she shown so plainly that she was crazy about him? She put her hands to her face and felt her flaming cheeks. Kim had misunderstood her bravado. He had thought her cheap!

Sleep was a fugitive. She was still awake when Carlton Drake brought Jessica home from Marie's. Dixie could hear the creak of the porch swing, their voices lifted in altercation, and Carlton's angry slamming of the car door. Jessica was humming as she came upstairs. Which was a bad sign, Dixie thought miserably. It probably meant that she was off with the old love and on with the new.

She lay awake for hours after that, planning what she would say to Kim the next time she saw him, how she would act. He would be at the country club the next night. He would have to ask her for a dance.

But the next morning her straight little nose was a ludicrous blob of red, and there were clownlike patches of scarlet sunburn beneath her eyes. Dixie stared at her reflection. Throwing herself across the bed she wept with abandonment. There would be no dance for her that night. Sunburned shoulders could be concealed, but there was simply nothing that you could do about a face like that.

Kim telephoned Jessica before nine o'clock. Dixie knew, because from behind her own locked door she heard her mother say that it was Doctor North. And Jessica, who usually refused to be disturbed before noon, raced downstairs to take

the call. And as if that wasn't adequate proof of her interest in Doctor Matthews's handsome nephew, Jessica was dressed and waiting when the gray coupé honked beneath Dixie's window twenty minutes later.

Behind the pink organdie curtains, Dixie peered down at Kim as he swung out of the car, unbelievably good-looking in a brown suit with a belted-in coat, the sun glinting on his dark, well-brushed hair. Jessica was all in white again.

"Think I'd better have a look at Dixie's arm?" Dixie heard him say.

"At this time of day?" Jessica laughed. "Dixie's the laziest person in the world. She never gets up until lunch time."

Lazy, indeed! Furious, but unable to defend herself, Dixie watched them drive away.

Mrs. Lovell permitted herself to be sworn to secrecy about her younger daughter's face. Lips twitching with amusement, she agreed to tell any inquirers that Dixie had wrenched her ankle and was confined to her room. She promised that Doctor North would not see her. Nor Jessica.

For three days, Dixie stayed in her self-imposed prison. Mrs. Lovell reported telephone calls from the crowd, including Pamela. And there were roses from Carlton Drake and from Eddie Price, who had given her quite a rush until Jessica had decided to annex him. But Kim, after two unsuccessful attempts to see her, left her strictly alone. He was, Dixie told herself, much too busy with Jessica to bother.

By the fourth day, Sunday, her nose had resumed its normal proportions. Dixie did her hair over twice, and changed her mind half a dozen times before she decided what

dress she should wear. A blue-and-white dotted swiss was elected. She skipped downstairs when she heard Kim's car stop in the driveway shortly before one o'clock. He bumped his head getting out of the coupé when he saw her.

"Hello," he said, his face very red. "Nice to see you in circulation again. How are the arm and ankle? I worried a lot about your arm, and your not letting me dress it. You could have phoned Uncle Dan to fix it up, you know."

He was fussed about the other night! She could afford to be generous.

"My arm is healing nicely," she said, "and there really wasn't a thing wrong with my ankle. I've been taking—well, a sort of rest cure. What's the crowd planning for today?"

Kim looked at her so oddly that her heart missed a beat. "Pamela Parker is giving a picnic at some place called Huntington Lake."

Dixie traced the line of green trim on the car door with an unsteady finger. "I'd love to go to the picnic, too. I——"

Jessica, carrying a pair of red denim cushions and her bathing suit, joined them. "Well, for pity's sake, don't go trying to crash Pamela's party," she said. "There are to be fifteen couples as it is."

She gave Dixie a long, hard look. "Take these things, will you, Kim? I left my compact in the garage. Be with you in a minute."

It took Kim a long time to unlock the trunk of the car. Face averted, he said: "About the other night—— I——"

But Jessica was back. Whatever he had intended to say went unfinished. Wistfully, Dixie watched them drive away. Then she sprinted for the garage.

Jessica, however, had anticipated her impulse, she found. The powder compact had been only an excuse. Air was hissing from loosened valve cores. Jessica had seen to it that the car would shortly be resting on four flat tires!

Dixie sat down on the running board and pondered. She could fix the tires all right and drive the car to Huntington Lake, but that wouldn't entirely solve her problem. After she had arrived at the picnic, how could she get Kim away from Jessica? Long enough, anyway, for him to finish what he had started to say?

In the house she thumbed through the telephone directory. The older Lovells had taken the 10:05 train into the city so that left Dixie free to make her rather unusual phone call without an audience. And as it was the general Sunday dinner hour of the neighborhood, she was unobserved when she climbed briskly inside an ambulance which slid to a smooth stop in the driveway some fifteen minutes later.

Huntington Lake was at least five miles out from Denton. Dixie speculated on the probable cost of the trip, and then dismissed the thought as irrelevant. It would be worth any amount to have things right again between Kim and herself. She wished now that she hadn't been so silly about her sunburned face. If she had permitted him to dress her arm she would have had that time alone with him. Jessica couldn't be absolutely sure of Kim, or she would never have resorted to the tire trick. Dixie sighed. She had simply wasted three precious days.

The driver had been instructed to drive slowly. She didn't want to risk late arrivals at Pamela's picnic wrecking things for her. The am-



Kim said: "About the other night, Dixie— I—" But Jessica was back. She gave Dixie a long, hard look. Whatever Kim had intended to say went unfinished.

balance pulled off the main highway at a designated side road and stopped.

"Make what you're supposed to say sound urgent," she told the grinning driver. "It—it is urgent," Dixie added, her hand creeping under the

soft blanket to her pounding heart.

"I'm to bring this guy North back. And then I'm to make myself scarce," he said. "O. K., beautiful."

Dixie powdered her nose with agitated fingers as the minutes limped along. It was breathlessly hot in-

side the ambulance, but she had to stay beneath the blanket. What if Kim were out somewhere on the lake? What if some of the other boys volunteered to come with him? She simply had to see him alone.

Dixie was powdering her nose for a second time when she heard the crunch of gravel under hurrying feet. She risked a glance through the long open doors and sank back hastily to the cot. Kim was coming on the run. She kept her face hidden by the blanket until he was bending over her. Then she sat up and laughed at his startled expression.

"I told you I liked picnics," she said. "Do you suppose Pamela is going to be awfully mad at me for coming uninvited?"

Kim didn't answer. He simply looked at her, the muscles of his jaw tightening, his eyes dark with anger. Dixie swallowed nervously.

"Listen," he said at last, sitting down in the place intended for an ambulance attendant. "It's high time somebody told you a thing or two. You're rotten spoiled, Dixie Lovell. Cheating is a game with you."

She couldn't have been more stunned if he had slapped her.

"You've let me worry since Tuesday night, without giving me a chance to say that I was sorry," he went on. "I'll admit I had that coming. But why go to the elaborate pretense of making every one think you were laid up with a wrenched ankle? You tricked your friends into wasting their sympathy, into sending you flowers. It was cheating, letting your family wait on you. You——"

"I don't see where you were especially cheated." Dixie had found her voice. She was furious. "You didn't send as much as a dandelion. You——"

Kim backed out of the ambulance. "You cheated me out of more than you will ever know. But skip it. Right now you're probably cheating somebody out of a comfortable trip to the hospital, but, of course, you couldn't be expected to think of that!" He was gone.

"Home, James!" Dixie called to the driver after a little while. She tried to make it sound jaunty, but her voice wobbled so traitorously she knew it would not deceive him.

With her anger so short-lived, Dixie sent out a frantic SOS to her pride. Who was this Kim North, anyway, that he thought he could kiss a girl as he had kissed her that night? Who could talk to a girl as he had done just now? But huddled in a wretched little heap Dixie knew the answers before she asked herself the questions. Kim wasn't just any man. Kim was—well, Kim. It had seemed ridiculous to fall in love with a mere picture, but Kim North in the flesh had justified that absurdity.

As soon as the ambulance reached the outskirts of Denton, Dixie dismissed it, with a fervent prayer that she hadn't kept some really ill person from using it, as Kim had predicted. Even by seeking out the shadiest streets, it was a long, hot walk home. Nothing had been gained, Dixie thought as she dragged herself up the front steps. Indeed, quite a little had been lost.

It was on that same Sunday that Doctor Matthews decided the McGregor place would do for the new hospital, and therefore, Pamela's picnic marked the end of the festivities planned in Kim's honor.

A small army of men was put to work remodeling the old mansion, and between supervising its conversion and taking over the greater part of his uncle's practice, Kim made

few social appearances. That is, the kind where Dixie might have met him in a crowd, casually and without embarrassment.

She had abundant opportunities to see Kim alone, but she grew expert in avoiding them. The small gray coupé stopped for Jessica each morning on its way to the McGregor place, and frequently, too, when Kim began his round of calls in the late afternoon.

The insufferable heat made as good an excuse as any when Mr. Lovell commented on his younger daughter's listlessness. He suggested a trip to Duluth by water for the two girls, and Dixie found it not at all surprising that Jessica, too, declined to go. What was harder to understand was that Jessica's nerves seemed to be on edge, that she went around constantly with a tense, expectant expression. Somehow, it didn't make sense to Dixie, with Kim so attentive.

Almost all the crowd went away during August, which took Dixie out of the range of Pamela Parker's observing eyes. There were post cards from Marie, rhapsodizing over the beauty of Maine woods, cards from Bettina Drake, Carlton's sister, of the "wish you were here" type, and even an occasional card from Carlton who had taken over the management of his father's branch office in Linwood the week Kim had arrived in Denton. For Dixie, everything was dated as happening before or after Kim had come into her life.

But, of course, in so small a town she could not forever avoid seeing him. A perverse fate seemed to delight in managing things so that Dixie continued to appear at a disadvantage when they did meet. There was the time when the Apple Hut was raided. She and Jessica had gone there with Bill Cummings to

try their luck, in a small way, on the roulette wheel. Some one helped Jessica to get away when the police came. It was Dixie Kim saw in the line-up for booking when he happened in at the police station for a chat and a cigarette with Grady, the night sergeant.

And as if that hadn't been bad enough, Dixie was riding with Bill when his car knocked down small Ann Brewer. She was holding the child in her arms, stanching the flow of blood from the cut among Ann's curls when Kim arrived. White and shaken, she looked up into his face.

"You were with Ann?" Kim asked sharply. "You're hurt, too?"

Dixie shook her head. "I was in the car with Bill. It really wasn't his fault. He——"

Kim said: "Don't you suppose I know how these things generally happen?"

"Oh, I—I hate you," Dixie choked. "Why don't you go back to B-Boston where you b-belong?"

But you couldn't go on hating a man who was working as hard as Kim was to save the life of old Minnie Kranz, who had done the Lovells' washing for fifteen years. You couldn't hate a man who was privately and quietly financing a month at camp for half a dozen poor children of Denton. You just couldn't really hate a man whom you cared for as Dixie cared for Kim North.

Big events as well as little ones make up the connecting links of life. On Friday, which was next to the last day in August, the new hospital had its official opening. On Saturday, Carlton Drake arrived for a week-end with his folks, and Bill Cummings bought a new car. On Monday, Labor Day, Bettina Drake gave a swimming party in her brother's honor.

It was on the way to this party at Huntington Lake that Bill, with Dixie riding beside him, decided to give the new coupé a work-out, and rammed another car. There had been only time enough for Dixie to curve her left arm protectingly over her face before the crash. It was her last conscious movement until she came to in the new hospital.

"Compound fracture. Bring me something to give her for the pain when she comes to," Kim was saying to a nurse when Dixie opened her eyes.

She shut them again and said: "I bet the something will be another lecture! Well, go ahead, shoot. I ought to be able to take it by now."

The door closed softly. There was a long silence. Dixie peered through her lashes. Kim had gone out with the nurse. She was alone. She caught her breath on a sob.

When the nurse did bring her the "something" for the pain, Dixie took it gratefully because her left arm ached sickeningly and her head hurt. She slept until late afternoon, and when she awakened Mrs. Lovell was sitting at the window, knitting on an apple-green *bouclé* dress she was making for Jessica.

"Where're dad and Jess?" Dixie asked.

Her mother, she noticed, counted ever so many stitches before she said brightly: "Father is talking to Doctor Matthews. Jessica was married a couple of hours ago. They couldn't take a trip just now so they've gone into the city for dinner and the theater for a celebration. Father and I didn't know anything of her plans, but we thought she might have told you."

"No," Dixie said faintly, "she—she didn't tell me. That is, in so many words." Then: "I suppose Doctor Matthews will be in later?"

"He promised to," Mrs. Lovell told her. "Now don't do any more talking, dear."

A nurse had just finished feeding Dixie her supper when old Doctor Matthews bustled in. He settled himself into the chair vacated by the nurse. "Hm-m-m, not going to make any money on you," he said, eyes twinkling. "Thought you'd be here long enough to pay for a few new doorknobs, but you'll be going home in a day or two."

"How's Bill?"

Doctor Matthews tweaked his nose. "Broke more than a speed record this time. Arm. Some ribs. But he's going to be all right. Anybody tell you yet about that nephew of mine?"

Dixie said: "Yes. I—I knew he was planning to."

"Great boy," his uncle remarked proudly. "Hard worker. Biggest day in his life, but he wouldn't take more than twelve hours away from the hospital. He's operating in the morning on Minnie Kranz."

"Oh, old Minnie," Dixie said, clutching gratefully at this new subject for conversation. "Is her room on the same floor as mine?"

"Across the hall, one door down. Used to be the MacGregor library, remember? We've made it over into a three-bed room."

Dixie made a little pleading gesture with her good right arm. "Put me in with Minnie! She's so old, she'll be so frightened. And she hasn't any family of her own. It's such a small thing for me to do when she's always been so good to me. Please, Doctor Matthews."

Patting Dixie's hand he got up stiffly. "She isn't alone, child. Another one of the beds is occupied. Holidays make good business for the doctors, you know."

Dixie clung to his hand. "Please,"

she coaxed. "You said it was a three-bed room. It will mean so much to Minnie."

The old doctor whisked out his handkerchief and blew his nose violently. "I'm a sentimental old fool. Yes, I know what it would mean to Minnie. We'll move you in the morning while Kim's operating. She's had her hypo for the night. I'll send a nurse around to give you one too, young lady."

The white canvas curtains which were slid along heavy wire at night and during visiting hours, separating the three-bed room into private cubicles, were drawn back when Dixie was moved into the center bed the next morning. Next to her, some girl Dixie had never seen before was fussing with her hair, using one hand and a small mirror from a shabby purse which lay on the table close to the bed. Her nose was taped, one eye blackened, and bandages completely swathed the left arm from hand to shoulder.

"Hello," the girl grinned. "I'm not the bride of *Frankenstein*—just the target for a hit-and-run driver."

Dixie grinned back at her. They chatted until Minnie was wheeled in from the operating room, still under the anæsthetic which had been given her.

The girl in the other bed fumbled for her pocketbook. "I can't stand much of that sort of thing. I've got to have a cigarette." She lighted one with shaking fingers.

It happened a split second later. Turning her head to say something to Dixie the tip of the cigarette contacted the gauze bandage that wrapped her left arm. A tiny scorched brown spot spread and grew. Then a thin flame began licking its way down the dressing. The girl screamed and beat at her left arm with her good hand.

Dixie, though still lacking coordination of muscle, swung her feet awkwardly to the floor. A small rug lay between the two beds. Fumblingly, she half lifted, half dragged it with her right arm up to the other's high bed, smothering the flames by its weight and her own frantic beating. Then the room was filled with nurses.

Doctor Matthews bustled in. Kim came, wearing an operating-room apron that tied at the back of his neck. Some one drew the white canvas curtains which separated the two beds. And a voice said, "You mean Dixie Lovell?" Dixie heard that above the hysterical cries of the burned girl and Doctor Matthews's clipped orders to the nurses.

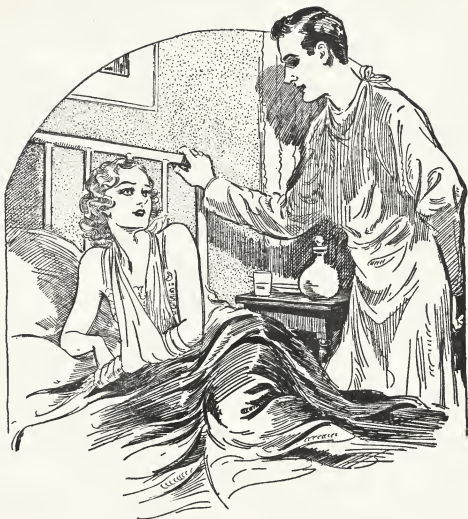
And then Kim was standing beside her bed. "A nurse just told me what you did," he began haltingly. "I—I just want to say that I think you're a pretty swell person."

"Thanks." Dixie stared at the cream-colored wall before her. "Congratulations, yourself."

"Thanks," Kim said, too. "Only I don't deserve much credit. I just happened to learn yesterday that Doctor Hare, the English specialist, was in the city for a couple of days, and I braced him for some help in Minnie Kranz's case. Hare has always been an idol of mine, but I'd never dared hope I'd ever meet him. He not only gave me an interview, but went into detail as to how I should handle the operation."

Dixie blinked. "You—you went into the city yesterday to see Doctor Hare? Then—then whom did Jess marry?"

"Carlton Drake. Whom did you think? They had a grand scrap the night of Marie Atwell's party. Patched it up yesterday when he got back to Denton—he has a man-size job over in Linwood, you know—and



"I've never felt about any girl as I feel about you, Dixie. Won't you give me a chance to try to make you care for me? A chance to tell you how wonderful I think you are? That I love you, that I want to marry you?"

then they were married before they could fight again. Doctor Kim North, Adviser to the Lovelorn, that's me. I've been your sister's wailing wall for nearly six weeks."

"But I thought you liked her!"

"What's that got to do with— Has Mrs. Kranz regained consciousness yet?" he interrupted himself to ask a passing nurse who shook her head. Kim reached for the curtain

which separated Minnie's bed from Dixie's, and drew it. Two walls of canvas shut Kim and Dixie away from the rest of the world.

"I do like Jessica," he said. "But not as much as I like her sister. I've never felt about any girl as I feel about you, Dixie. That night when you drove with me to the Brattons, Pamela had started me off on the wrong foot with her fool remark

about that back-road stuff, and I simply lost my head when I thought you were kissing every Tom, Dick and Harry. What I did that night was inexcusable. What I said at the picnic was, too. I can't ask you to forgive me—I can only ask for another chance."

"Another chance for what?" Dixie asked.

"To try to make you care for me. A chance to tell you how wonderful I think you are. That I love you, that I want to marry you."

Starry-eyed, Dixie said: "Well, you're not only asking for a chance, you're taking one telling me all that, if you don't really mean it! I care, too. Terribly. I have from the very beginning. That's why I pretended to have a wrenched ankle when I was a sight from sunburn. That's

why I pulled that crazy ambulance stunt."

"Angel!" Kim bent over her swiftly, and then stopped. "I almost forgot your poor arm," he said. "You know, sweetheart, you aren't a very good risk for accident insurance, what with fishhooks and auto accidents!"

"Well, there's nothing wrong with my lips," Dixie reminded him, smiling pertly.

Kim drew her to him tenderly, and for a full minute there was no sound save the pounding of their hearts as their lips met in a long, rapturous kiss. Dixie sighed ecstatically. "It's so wonderful," she murmured. "I'd like now to be forever."

"It will be forever," Kim promised solemnly, and his lips claimed hers again.



LOVERS' REUNION

PUT your arms around me

That is all I ask,

For your dear affection

Lightens every task.

Put your arms around me,

Hold me close and then,

Let love's tender miracle

Make me smile again.

Put your arms around me

Softly cheek to cheek,

We'll forget the past

And of the future speak!

H. K. ROBERTS.



A SERIAL—Part II.

The Broken Triangle

By Peggy Gaddis

CHAPTER IV.

FOR a moment there was silence in the small, neat room.

Through the stillness Arlis was conscious of Tony's sharp, astonished gasp. She knew that his eyes widened and that he stared at her as though he were not sure that his ears had not deceived him.

Arlis held herself rigid, her hands clasped in front of her. Because if she made the slightest move, she knew that her shaking knees would refuse to support her. She scarcely dared to breathe. But Tony thought her calm and composed. She was pale, almost ugly in that light and in the dark, plain dress that she wore.

After a stunned moment, he repeated a trifle dazedly:

"I can—marry you?"

Arlis said quietly: "Yes. Does the prospect seem so horrible to you, Tony? I'm sorry if it does, but I'm afraid there's no other way out for either of us. You see, if you don't marry me, people will say you are a cad, and that you were willing enough to permit me to sacrifice my reputation for you, by admitting that I was with you in your apartment that night. Mothers won't think you safe company for their daughters and men won't trust you with their wives, and it will be very unpleasant for you all around!"

Tony's mouth twisted ever so faintly.

"Kind of you to be so concerned about me!" he said harshly.

Arlis managed a smile that did not betray her tremulous lips.

"Oh, but I'm ever so much more concerned about myself!" she told him sweetly. "In the eyes of everybody who can read the newspapers this morning, I am branded a shameless woman, one who goes about spending the night in young men's apartments. I doubt very much whether I can be rehabilitated even by marriage, but we'll have to chance it! Because, as a 'scarlet woman' I can no longer get a secretarial job, so you see, you'll have to marry me!"

Tony's contempt and anger were even more pronounced now, and he sneered openly.

"Put down that shotgun. I'll marry you, of course, if that is what you want. But—well, after all, Arlis, you asked for it! I don't love you!" he reminded her grimly.

"Of course not. I know that," said Arlis gently. "You love Sylvia, who was really your 'lady of the evening,' but who ran out on you the moment she found you were in trouble, in spite of the fact that her testimony would have freed you as easily as mine did!"

She saw the color darken in Tony's face at that gibe, and his eyes no longer met hers squarely. It was plain that Sylvia's defection had hurt him cruelly, but even now he tried to defend her.

"You've no right to judge Sylvia so severely. After all, she had a great deal at stake," he said, but his tone told her that he realized

the weakness of that even better than she did.

"Yes, if Sylvia had told the truth, David would have divorced her, and then you could have married her!" Arlis reminded him, and Tony shot her a look that was almost pure hate.

"This is getting us nowhere!" he said grimly. "How soon shall we be married?"

Arlis said quietly: "The sooner the better, don't you think?"

Tony said ungraciously: "I suppose so! This afternoon?"

Arlis nodded. "I'd—like it to be a minister, if you don't mind, instead of just at city hall or wherever one goes."

THE STORY SO FAR: Arlis

Gordon is in love with wealthy Tony Endicott, whom she suspects of having an affair with her cousin, Mrs. Sylvia Harper. Tony is accused of having killed two men in a midnight hit-and-run accident, and to save him from a prison sentence, Arlis says that she was with Tony in his apartment at the time. In reality, it was Sylvia who was with Tony, but to save herself from disgrace, she dashes off to Europe with her husband. Tony tells Arlis that he doesn't know how he'll ever repay her for what she did, and she replies, "You'll marry me, of course."

"I'll attend to it. Shall we say three o'clock?" Tony's voice was as brusque as though they were discussing some matter of cold business, and Arlis strove to match his tone.

"Three o'clock will do nicely. I shan't keep you waiting," she answered, and flushed at the look that leaped into Tony's eyes.

He turned and without a word stalked out of the apartment, very carefully closing the door behind him.

Arlis stood for a long moment staring at the door, her eyes wide and fixed in an unseeing gaze, her breath coming fast. She was going to marry Tony that afternoon! Tony, whom she adored with all her heart and for whom she had willingly and without a second's hesitation, thrown away her reputation. Tony, who didn't love her. Perhaps never would love her. Tony who, at this moment, probably hated her.

But there was a faint new hope in her heart. She was going to be his wife, even if only in name. She would have an opportunity to show him what an attractive, pleasant person she could be. As his wife, she might even win his love! Sylvia was out of the picture. She needn't compete with her loveliness and glamour—she would have a clear field.

Arlis whirled with shining eyes and ran to the desk, where she took out her bank book and studied it. There were small entries week after week covering the years she had worked. Eight years! Her first job when she had earned only seven dollars a week and had put one dollar in the bank, and as the salary increased, so had the deposits, until now, added to the check that David had given her before he and Sylvia sailed, she had a fairly sizable amount. And never had she needed it as she did now!

She thrust the bank book into her purse, caught up her hat, stared at herself in the mirror.

"Why!" she gasped half aloud in amazement. "You're almost pretty! Oh, Arlis, you've got to be—for Tony!"

Her color deepened at that and she turned swiftly from the mirror and hurried out. There was so much to be done before three o'clock. The bank first, then a swanky beauty shop where they would know all sorts of miracles to transform merely nice-looking girls into raving beauties, and then a smart shop—

CHAPTER V.

The hands of the clock pointed exactly to three when there was a knock at the door and she opened it to admit Tony. He paused just inside the door to stare at her, wide-eyed.

"Why—Arlis!" he said helplessly, as though he scarcely recognized her.

Her skin glowed and there was a deft application of rouge on her cheeks that deepened and brightened the color of her eyes; her mouth was sweet and full and warmly scarlet. Her dress of soft red wool fitted her slender form in a way to call attention to exquisite curves and contours that her dark, conservative office dresses had modestly concealed. The hat of red was small, close-fitting, and tilted audaciously over one eye, and against the warm color her hair was blue-black and beautifully waved. Her feet in slippers of black suède and biege stockings thin as a breath looked gay and expensive. Flung across a chair was a coat of red wool that matched her dress. It was collared in soft gray squirrel. There was no trace here of the cool, efficient, matter-of-fact secretary in her neat, dark and inconspicuous clothes. The warm red of her cos-



Tony didn't try to hide his contempt and anger. "I'll marry you, of course, if that is what you want. But remember, Arlis, you asked for it! I don't love you!" he reminded her grimly.

time seemed to light a fire that illumined and made lovely her oval face, the shining dark hair and eyes,

and the deft, suave cut of the gown made her figure alluring.

"I do hope you have no aversion

to red," Arlis said hastily as she caught the look of surprise in Tony's eyes. "I know that red is one color you can't be lukewarm about. You're either mad about it, or you're mad at it! I hope you're the former—I chose it, you know, to match my reputation!"

Tony said sharply:

"Don't be an idiot, Arlis! You're no 'scarlet woman!'"

Arlis laughed lightly. "I'm afraid you'd have some difficulty convincing people of that, though our marriage may have some small effect, at that!"

"Oh, yes, I almost forgot. I believe these are the traditional flowers?" said Tony awkwardly, and handed her a small square white box out of which Arlis lifted a beautiful corsage of white orchids and lilies of the valley.

"Oh, Tony, how nice! They're lovely!" she told him, as she fastened the flowers in place.

"Glad you like them," he said, almost grumpily. "And now, shall we go?"

For just a moment Arlis stood before him, looking up into his eyes, and her heart cried out so sharply that she felt sure he must hear it. "Oh, Tony, my darling. If only you'd love me just a little! I'd be so happy with only a shred of the love you're denying me."

But Tony was blind to the plea in her eyes; deaf to the cry of her heart. He stood waiting beside the open door, his face set and cold, his eyes grim. And after a moment Arlis lifted her head proudly and walked past him and out into the hall, to wait for the elevator.

Tony's car was downstairs. He helped her into it without a word, following her. He turned the car about and headed out of town, to come to a halt in front of a small

gray stone church set back from the pleasant tree-shaded street. There was a velvety green lawn surrounding the church, and shrubbery that grew close about the small building.

Tony helped Arlis out of the car and she looked at the church in delight.

"Oh, Tony, how sweet of you! It's a dear little place!" she cried, and Tony said, with a satirical twist of his mouth:

"I thought it looked romantic. I hoped you'd like it."

The tone of his voice cut her to the quick, and she lifted her head proudly as she walked beside him up the flagged path to the church, where a sexton met them to escort them up the aisle to the altar, where the minister waited.

Like all girls, Arlis had dreamed of the day when she would stand before the altar beside the man she loved, her hand in his. It had been a little like this reality, yet the reality was cruelly unlike the dream. For in the dream there had been a white gown, a wedding veil, bridesmaids, an organ's muted tones, friends filling the pews—and the man who stood beside her would love her and want her. The cruelest part of the reality was that the man who repeated his response to the minister's solemn query was there very much against his will. There was no love in his heart for her. No tenderness, no compassion. Only an impatient sense of duty. He was marrying her because she was virtually forcing him to do it, and she knew with a sinking heart that he was very close to hating her at that moment.

When the brief ceremony was over, and they came down the steps of the church into the September sunlight, Tony looked down at Arlis and said grimly:

"And now, what next?"

Arlis said quietly: "A honeymoon wouldn't be a bad idea, do you think?"

A look of cynical amusement touched Tony's set face for a moment, and he shrugged, raising his eyebrows a trifle.

"Oh, we're going to have all the trimmings, are we? O. K., you're the boss. Where do we go from here? Bar Harbor? Aiken? Pinehurst? It's too early for Palm Beach——"

"None of those places, Tony!" Arlis interrupted swiftly. "Somewhere quiet and peaceful."

"Oh, where we can be alone together, just we two?" Tony was not being very graceful about it, but Arlis steadied herself with an effort and said levelly:

"Why not? After all, Tony, we *are* married. Why shouldn't we have a chance to become acquainted. We scarcely know each other, and, Tony you never can tell—you *might* like me a little, if you got to know me!"

Something in her tone, in the humility of her words, struck the bitterness from Tony's manner and he got into the car beside her.

"All right, Arlis, you win! A traditional honeymoon, 'somewhere away from it all.' Where would you suggest?" he asked quietly.

"Some place that you like, Tony. Some place you're fond of—I'd like that best," she answered, and Tony turned swiftly to her, almost eagerly.

"Do you mean that, Arlis? Because if you do, I've got a shack up-State, in the mountains. It's glorious up there this time of the year." His face fell and he added, almost brusquely: "But, of course, you wouldn't like that. It's a crude sort of place—very few conveniences. Just a hunting lodge."

"It sounds glorious. I'd love it!" Arlis told him swiftly.

"Honestly? You wouldn't mind roughing it?"

"I'd love it!" she repeated, so sincerely, that he could no longer doubt her.

His grumpiness vanished. He was like a schoolboy unexpectedly promised a treat. As they drove back to town he told her enthusiastically about the mountain camp, and Arlis glowed with happiness because she had at last managed to get under his guard so that he was natural and friendly and at ease with her.

If only she could keep him like this! If only he would stop hating her and feeling bitter toward her, long enough to discover that she was real and human. He might even learn to like her, she told herself hopefully.

There was a moment's awkwardness as they reached her apartment, and Arlis met the situation by saying quietly:

"I suppose we'll use your apartment—mine is rather small. I'm all packed. I'll have the superintendent bring my bags downstairs."

He was grateful for her matter-of-fact attitude and soon the bags—handsome new ones packed with the trousseau she had hurriedly gathered together that morning—were stowed in the capacious rumble, and the car turned toward his apartment in a more expensive and exclusive neighborhood.

"If we're going up to the lodge, we'd better wait and start in the morning," he suggested, his eyes on the road ahead. "It's a long day's drive, you know."

"Couldn't we wait until the next day? After all, I don't know that I have any clothes suitable for a place like that. I'll want boots, I suppose, and breeches and a sweater—and a gun, too, of course."



"See here, Arlis, let's get this straight. You're my wife in the eyes of the world and the law, but, if you don't mind, it will be one of those married-in-name-only affairs! I told you in the beginning that I don't love you."

Tony turned to her swiftly, eagerly.

"Do you hunt, Arlis?" he wanted to know, and Arlis, because she knew that he was fond of hunting, said carelessly:

"Oh, yes, of course. I've never had much opportunity, but I imagine it's fun."

"It's glorious sport. We'll have a grand time. Now I know you're going to like the lodge. I'd no idea you were such a kindred spirit!" said Tony happily, and Arlis said sensibly:

"No, of course not. How could you? As I've pointed out before, you scarcely know me. I can be awfully nice."

Tony grinned at that, as he would at an impertinent child.

"We'll have to see about that!" he answered, as he brought the car to a stop in front of his apartment house.

A hall boy carried Arlis's bags up to Tony's apartment, and there was a moment of embarrassment when the boy stared shrewdly at Arlis and she thought he hid a contemptuous grin. But when he was gone and the door had closed behind him, Tony turned to Arlis and said quickly:

"I haven't had time to get things straight—there's only one bedroom, but you can take that and I'll use the couch in the living room."

Arlis could no more have controlled the words with which she answered him than she could have controlled her uneven breathing.

"That's—not necessary, Tony. After all, I am your wife, you know!"

Tony turned and stared at her, frowning a little as though he thought there might be some hidden meaning back of the words. Then his eyes grew chill and there was once more that bitterness in his manner as he said firmly:

"See here, Arlis, let's get this straight. You're my wife in the eyes of the world and the law and all that, but, if you don't mind, it will be one of those good, old-fashioned married-in-name-only affairs! I'm sorry, but you may remember I told you in the beginning that I don't love you. I don't want to be unpleasant, but I haven't changed my mind about that!"

And before she could manage her humiliation and shame to answer him, he had walked out of the room, carrying her bags into the bedroom. Arlis shivered a little, and for a moment covered her eyes with shaking hands. She had tacitly offered herself to Tony, and he had baldly, almost insultingly refused the gift. She thought she had never known such shame, such humiliation, but she could not be sorry that she had made the offer. She loved Tony with all her heart, and she *was* his wife. How else was he to know that she was more than willing to live up to the bargain she had made with him? That she was willing their marriage should be fulfilled and made perfect?

He came back a moment later, saying something casual about her room being ready for her, and added:

"Shall we have dinner in, or would you rather go out?"

Because she sensed that he would prefer to dine out, she offered that as her own desire. By the swift, sharp touch of relief in his face she knew that she had been right about that, and trembled a little as she went into the room he had given her to dress for dinner.

Once more she chose to wear red. An evening gown, smart and simple and daringly cut, with satin sandals perched on slim silver heels, and her wedding bouquet of orchids and lilies

of the valley fastened to one thin shoulder strap. Tony, who had never seen her in any evening gown save the cheap black one she had worn at Sylvia's, stared at her in amazement that deepened into almost unwilling admiration, as he held her wrap of scarlet-and-silver brocade.

They came in late, after dinner and the theater, where people had glanced at them curiously, because the news of their wedding had been in the afternoon papers, and Tony had given a statement over the telephone to the editors of the two morning papers. They said good night as casually as though they were mere acquaintances and not a groom and his bride. Arlis went into the bedroom and closed the door behind her.

As she made ready for bed, she heard the slight sounds Tony made as he moved about the living room, but she was so tired that she was asleep almost before her head touched the pillow, and did not awaken until the morning sunlight flooded the room.

She rose, bathed, donned filmy negligee of ivory chiffon and cream-colored lace, and went into the living room, her heart beating high. But Tony was already gone. A little smiling Filipino houseboy in immaculate white coat stood beside a small table laid for breakfast, and handed her an envelope as he bowed to her. Then he disappeared.

She sat down and saw that the table was laid for one. She slit open the envelope, and a sheaf of bills tumbled into her plate, together with a note across which stalked Tony's handwriting.

Gone out to get things ready for the camp. Know you will want to do some shopping. If the inclosed isn't enough, have things sent C. O. D.—I've arranged

to have them paid for at the desk downstairs. Be back for dinner around six.

For a long moment Arlis sat studying the note and the money. Then she tucked them both into her napkin and dug a spoon into the yellow-green luscious melon, as she planned her day.

It would have surprised Tony very much if he had known just what were Arlis's preparations for the "honeymoon." At the telephone in her room, she called a shop famous for its sports attire, and ordered "whatever was necessary" for a month's visit to a mountain hunting lodge, gave her size, her name and address, and hung up. The rest of the day she spent at a shooting gallery, where the proprietor devoted several hours to teaching her the rudiments of handling a gun.

That night she and Tony dined alone, being polite and courteous to each other, carefully avoiding any personalities, and the following morning, very early, with the rumble of the car piled with baggage, they set out on the four-hundred mile drive to the hunting lodge.

It was a glorious drive. As they entered the foothills about noon the scenery began to change. Trees that had been green and dusty and tired-looking back in the lowlands, here took on glorious colorings and made the landscape into a thrilling tapestry. They stopped for lunch at an old-fashioned farmhouse where they were given broiled country ham and omelette, cold, freshly churned buttermilk, hot biscuits and deep-dish apple pie.

They reached the lodge at dusk, and Arlis's impression of the place was of a long, low, rambling log house with a huge fieldstone chimney at one end, and a great veranda that ran across the front and along one side. She stood on the veranda

while Tony put the car in the garage, and looked out through the swift-gathering shadows, knowing that the view must be glorious in the daytime.

Tony came back and unlocked the door, bringing in the supplies while Arlis lighted the old-fashioned oil lamps and inspected the place. It was very cozy and cheerful, with its log walls decorated with a few old sporting prints; its racks of guns and shelves of books; a kitchen that was neat and commodious, its shelves well stocked with canned provisions.

Tony built a fire in the living room, and, when he had finished, came out to the kitchen to see what Arlis was doing. He stared at her when she turned from the stove in which a roaring fire was blazing.

"I'll put the kettle on to boil while I go and change my dress," she told him matter-of-factly. "And if you'll put that basket of groceries here on the table, I'll get supper in a jiffy."

Tony said lightly: "Don't tell me you can cook, Arlis!"

"I won't tell you—I'll wait and prove it!" she assured him gayly, as she brushed past him and into the small, neat bedroom where Tony had placed her bags.

For a moment she stood still, halfway in the task of changing her dress, then suddenly she knelt and hid her face against the old-fashioned candlewick spread that covered the four-poster bed.

"Oh, God, please make Tony learn to love me!" she whispered passionately, the tears very near the surface.

But only for a moment did she permit her emotions to get the best of her. She was on her feet, slipping into the crisp, simple dress that would make it easy for her to get supper. Tony watched her curi-

ously as she went about her tasks. And when she had placed on the table in the living room a simple, hearty meal that would appeal to a hungry man, he looked across at her and grinned.

"I never before knew that just broiled steak, a salad and coffee could look so appetizing! I didn't realize I was starved until I smelled that food!" he assured her, and Arlis vanished to the kitchen for a moment, to return with a plate heaped high with piping-hot biscuits. "You are a good cook, aren't you?" Tony said as he helped himself.

To Arlis, the moment was exquisite with its homely, simple quality. She looked about her at the big, lamp-lit room—the log fire blazing on the hearth, the crisp red-and-white checkered gingham curtains at the windows, the painted floor across which were scattered several fine animal skins in lieu of rugs, the shelves of books on either side of the huge fireplace. This was *home*. These four walls, inclosing the man she loved and herself! This simple, small miracle made all that she asked of life. Tony's love for her would complete and make perfect their marriage and set the seal of eternity upon her happiness. With a full heart she prayed that she might somehow be shown the way in which to bring about the fulfillment of that dream.

CHAPTER VI.

For a day or two they lived quietly and simply. Tony was courteous and friendly, though now and then when something happened to remind him that they were married and that that marriage had been at her command, his manner chilled and there was an edge of bitterness in his tone when he spoke to her. At

such moments Arlis's heart sank with discouragement. If she couldn't hope to make him forget that she had virtually forced him to marry her, she couldn't hope to win his love. There would always be an edge of resentment in his feeling toward her that would make love impossible. Desperately, she sought for ways to make him forget that she was his wife, and to remember only that she was a gay and amusing companion whose society he might find stimulating.

He came in at dusk one evening, excited as a boy.

"Where's your gun, Arlis? We're going hunting right after supper! There are plenty of possums this fall, and I've found a colored boy who has a bunch of possum hounds and swears he can show us at least a couple! So we ought to have a bit of sport. I'll get your gun and mine ready while you finish up supper."

Arlis's heart sank to her boots. She had never hunted in her life, nor had she the faintest desire to do so. Yet, if she hoped to win Tony's love—If she hoped to persuade him to forget that she had forced him to marry her, she must prove to him that his interests were hers; she must be his pal and comrade if she hoped later to be his best beloved. A mutuality of tastes, kindred interests, all these must go into her task of winning his love. And so, trying frantically to remember all the things that the shooting-gallery man had taught her in those hours back in town, and try-

ing not to let Tony see that she was distressed or shaken, she finished putting the hot, appetizing meal on the table and pretended to eat.

Afterward, she got into her hunting clothes—tan whipcord jodhpurs, soft brown boots, a rust-brown sweater with a tiny knitted cap of the same color tilted saucily on her dark head, and a gay scarf of orange-and-brown twisted nonchalantly about her throat.

"Gee, you look cute!" said Tony frankly when she presented herself for his inspection in the living room. That little involuntary phrase sank into her heart and curled itself there warm and sweet, never to be forgotten. From it she gained courage to go on with the night's ordeal.

She slung her shotgun carelessly along her arm, and

knew that Tony approved the practical ease of the gesture. Outside the house, the colored boy waited for them, holding his dogs with difficulty. He was about eighteen, stockily built, and clad in a weird assortment of ragged garments. The dogs were lean and gaunt, and as ugly and motley a collection as it would be possible to assemble, but to the trained hunter their fine points were instantly discernible.

The boy carried a flaming pine-knot torch, and led the way down the steep slope to a sort of ravine. Here he unleashed the dogs, murmuring to them as he released them. The dogs, with wild, joyous bayings,





"Here, snap out of it, Arlis!" said Tony sharply, and gave her a tiny shake. "No, I won't shoot the possum! But for Heaven's sake, stop crying!"

immediately scattered and went lopping off into the tangle of woods and undergrowth.

"Efn dey's a possum in two-three mile o' hyer, Ol' Bess she fin' him!" he told Tony boastfully, and they all plunged through the undergrowth after the dogs, following the leader, Old Bess.

The night was cold and still. Overhead the moon rode high, thin and cold and pallid, shedding a faint, ghostlike light.

Arlis shivered a little, as much with excitement as with the chill night, and Tony, turning to help her over a fallen tree, asked joyously:

"Isn't this grand sport?"

Arlis lied valiently: "Glorious. I love it!"

But her lie received a reward, for Tony tucked his hand under her elbow, drawing her closer to him, and said chummily: "You're a swell pal, Arlis!"

Suddenly the quiet of the still, cold night was split by the wild baying of one of the hounds. A long-drawn-out, mournful sound that echoed through the woods, and a moment later was joined by the baying of the other dogs as they raced to join the first one.

"Dar Ol' Bess now. She don't treed, boss, she don't treed. Ah tol' you she would!" cried the youth, and they all hurried as fast as they could in the direction from which came now the baying of the excited dogs.

They came out of a tangle of brush into a small clearing, just as the moon tore itself free of a tangle of clouds and shone down directly on them. The dogs were clustered at the foot of a tall tree that lifted leafless branches in stark beauty against the blue sky.

Tony said sharply: "There he is, Arlis, a perfect shot. Right against

the moon. Stand here and you can get a grand shot at him!"

He caught Arlis's elbow and swung her about, pointing upward. Automatically she swung her gun to her shoulder and sighted along the barrel. Then something seemed to close sharply about her heart, and she caught her breath. For there, outlined against the moon as Tony had said, was a small, furry bundle, the opossum retreating in vain hope of escape. He was so still, Arlis had the crazy idea that she could hear his terrified heart beat loudly in the silence. The dogs were temporarily still, waiting for the sound of the shot that would bring their quarry hurtling to earth.

"Go ahead, Arlis, you've got him!" ordered Tony sharply, but she gave a little sick cry and the gun dropped from her nerveless hands.

Tony flung her a glance, and then his own gun went to his shoulder and he sighted along the barrel. But before his finger could find the trigger and pull it, Arlis had flung herself upon him, crying out, knocking the gun down so that the bullet spattered harmless into the ground, and the opossum sat huddled in still terror against the tree trunk, unharmed.

"Don't! Oh, Tony, don't! He's so little and so—so frightened! You mustn't harm him!" she cried, and now she was in Tony's arms, clinging to him, sobbing wildly, her face hidden against his shoulder, his gun lying beside her own on the ground, while the colored boy and the dogs stared in bewilderment at the "strange white folks" who refused to shoot the game even after Old Bess had found and treed it.

"Here, snap out of it, Arlis!" said Tony sharply, and gave her a tiny shake. "Nobody's going to shoot the possum—he's all right. No, of

course I won't shoot him! But for Heaven's sake, stop crying!"

Arlis drew herself erect and tried hard to steady her voice. She faced him almost humbly, the tears glistening on her white face.

"I'm—I'm sorry, Tony!" she stammered. "I didn't mean to make a fool of myself, only—suddenly, it all seemed—so hideous! Three of us armed with loaded shotguns and a pack of dogs—all against one poor, harmless little thing! He looked so—pitiful, all huddled up like that, facing death bravely and gamely like—a good soldier. I couldn't stand it!"

Tony stared at her uncertainly, frowning a little. Then he turned his head and looked up at that small furry bundle outlined against the sky. That small, pitiful huddle "facing death bravely and gamely, like a good soldier."

He turned almost brusquely to the colored boy.

"Call off the dogs, Sam; we're going home! We'll do no more hunting to-night, or any other night, I'm afraid!" Then to Arlis: "If you don't stop crying, I swear I'll spank you!"

Arlis fought her tears all the way back to the lodge, and, once there, she turned to face him in the living room while he stirred up the fire.

"I'm sorry to have spoiled your sport, Tony," she told him unsteadily. "But I guess I'm just an hysterical woman!"

Tony brushed his hands to remove the dust and ashes from the fire that he had stirred to a roaring blaze.

"See here, Arlis, did you ever fire a gun in your life?" he demanded.

"Of course, I have!" she assured him, almost sharply.

"Where?" demanded Tony. "And when?"

"In—a shooting gallery, the day before we came here," said Arlis.

"Then you never hunted in your life until to-night?" he asked sternly, watching her closely.

She could not lie to him. Like a docile child, she shook her head. Tony stared. Then he snapped:

"Then why in blazes did you tell me you had? Or that you wanted to come up here with me?"

"Because I *did* want to come! Because I wanted to be a good comrade and have you enjoy yourself!" she told him honestly.

Tony frowned, puzzled.

"Then you are opposed to hunting on principle?" he demanded, and saw by her expression that she was. "Then it may interest you to know that you've about destroyed my interest in hunting, too. From now on, I'll never again face a kill without hearing you say 'he's facing death like a good soldier.' And, of course, I could never pull a trigger with that thought in mind."

Arlis said unsteadily: "I'm sorry to have spoiled your pleasure, Tony."

He turned on her almost violently.

"For Pete's sake, will you stop saying 'I'm sorry,' as though I had beaten you? And for Heaven's sake, go to bed, will you?" he snapped.

For a moment she stared at him, wide-eyed, a stricken look on her white face. Then she turned and stumbled toward her door, fumbling for the knob with a trembling hand. But before she could open the door, Tony had reached her side and his hand closed on hers, staying her a moment.

"I'm sorry, Arlis. I didn't mean to be a crab. Run along like a nice child and get a good night's sleep. And don't dream about good soldiers facing death, for I promise you no more of them will, at my hands," he said gently.

Arlis said swiftly: "I'm glad,
LS-4E

Tony. But I'm sorry I've spoiled your evening."

He studied her curiously for a moment, and then said in an entirely different tone:

"Do you know, I'm not at all sure that you have!"

He bent his head suddenly, and his lips brushed hers in a cool little careless kiss, such as he might have given to a sorrowing child he wished to comfort. Then he opened the bedroom door, pushed her gently into the room and pulled the door shut behind her.

Arlis stood still just inside the door, her eyes wide, the warm color flooding her face, her eyes starry. She raised one hand hesitantly, as though not sure that the kiss had really happened, and touched her lips uncertainly.

Tony had kissed her! Not a passionate, burning kiss, it is true. It had been gentle and tender—careless, perhaps, and impulsive. But it was a kiss just the same. Her heart shook with warm delight at the thought. Tony had kissed her! Oh, some day Tony would love her! Some day he would take her in his arms and hold her close and warm against his heart, and his lips would claim the kisses she would give so joyously, so freely! It would be that way! Oh, it must—it must!

The next afternoon, Tony decided to take the car and run into the village for supplies. It was a cold, rainy day, and Arlis decided not to go with him. She had plans of her own, and as soon as Tony had gone she set about carrying them out.

It was dusk when Tony came back, tired and wet and cold, for the car had had a flat tire, and he had had to change it himself. The windows of the lodge glowed with cheery light, and it was surprisingly pleas-

ant to come into the warm, cozy room and be greeted by the delicious odor of dinner cooking.

And then he saw Arlis as she stood in the door that led from the kitchen. She wore a white evening gown under her checkered gingham apron, and the extravagant dress made an audacious contrast to the rustic surroundings.

"It's a party!" she told him gayly. "You've just time to change and shake up a batch of cocktails before dinner is ready!"

"Great!" enthused Tony sincerely. "A party is the one thing I need to-night, after that miserable drive!"

She had spread the table near the open fire. In the center was a low black bowl filled with the very last of the autumn leaves. They added a festive note to the room.

Tony, vigorously wielding the cocktail shaker, and looking young and handsome in his evening attire, went to the radio and manipulated the dials until the room was filled with the music of a dance orchestra playing in a smart New York hotel.

"May I have this one, madame?" he asked, bowing low before Arlis, who tossed her head and said airily:

"Well, I've ever so many partners for it, but I suppose I shall have to give in to your insistence!"

They danced, laughing. They sat down at the table and ate, rising now and then to dance to the tantalizing, provocative music. Suddenly, as the music stopped and an announcer began to speak, Tony leaned over, keeping one arm about Arlis, and switched off the radio. Still holding her in his arms, he turned her about to face the light and inspected her closely, studying her as though he had never seen her before. He was flushed and bright-eyed, and something in his eyes made Arlis's breath come faster.



Sylvia Harper stepped into the room. She looked up at Tony with gay, laughing eyes, completely and superbly conscious of her welcome from him. She smiled and said sweetly: "Tony dear! How nice to see you again!"

"Did anybody ever tell you that you are a very pretty girl, Arlis?" he asked, and his tone was vibrant, a

little excited. "Not only pretty, but a very potent young person?"

Arlis tried to laugh, though her

own, was touched with wonder that lighted her eyes to starry brilliance and brought a soft tide of color to her cheeks. It was as Tony had said. She seemed suddenly to have bloomed, as though back of her eyes twin candles had been lighted, illuminating her whole being.

The look in his eyes as they studied her brought a wild, exultant thrill to her heart. It was a look she had prayed and hoped and dreamed to see there some day. But the reality was even lovelier and more exciting than it had been in her dreams. A look of—was it love? Was it passion? Or was it, best of all, a glorious combination of both?

She knew that he was about to kiss her, and the knowledge made all the beauty of life rush together in one thrilled, ecstatic, expectant moment, as she awaited that kiss, almost with bated breath.

Tony bent his head. As effortlessly, as simply as a dew-drenched flower lifts its face to the sun, Arlis lifted her lips. Another instant and that kiss would have become an exquisite reality—but before that instant could be realized, there was a sharp knock at the door!

Neither of them had heard the sound of a car in the drive. That

loud, imperious knock was their first hint of the approach of a caller. Tony turned his head, lifting it a little, as he stared, frowning, toward the door.

"Now, who the blazes do you suppose that could be?" he said savagely, and the knowledge that he was as sharply disappointed as she, helped a little to assuage the sharp disappointment that tugged at Arlis's heart, sending it plunging downward.

For a moment Tony hesitated, still holding Arlis close. But the knock came again, and Tony swore under his breath as he released Arlis and went to the door, flinging it open savagely.

The next moment his angry, glowing expression was wiped out in complete amazement as a woman stepped across the threshold. A woman lovely, exquisitely dressed, more radiantly glamorous than ever. A woman who looked up at Tony with gay, laughing eyes, completely and superbly conscious of her welcome from him. A woman who smiled and said in a sweet, tender voice:

"Tony dear! How nice to see you again!"

It was, of course, Sylvia Harper.

TO BE CONCLUDED.





Better Than Cupid

By Edna Frank Jones

CYNTHIA fastened the punctured tire securely in the rack on the side of her dusty car. She scowled at the rugged mountain scenery. It had taken twenty minutes to change that tire on this crazy grade. Now the sun was low, and she had no idea how far it was yet to her destination. It had been maddening, after the ninety-mile drive to Glenville, to be directed by

the attendant at the dog pound, "Up the Big Pines road a piece, five or six miles mebbe." Her speedometer already showed fourteen.

She climbed wearily into the abused twelve-cylinder car. It had been brand-new a week ago, but the past three days had aged it a year in appearance. Cynthia had a worn look, too. As she pressed the starter, she glanced in the mirror.

A dirty-faced girl squinted back at her. Her brown ringlets were blown into witch-locks that straggled from under her smudged peaked hat.

"Oh, well," Cynthia thought, "what does it matter? This road will probably run slap into the ends of the earth very soon, anyway."

The heavy car crawled around a hairpin curve; it made a steep climb in second, and with a final bump came to an abrupt stop in front of a redwood cabin. Behind a distant peak, the sun was just sliding out of sight. The shadows under the spruces and pines were suddenly black.

The prospect of going back over that narrow, shelving, rocky road after dark, all because of the unknown owner of this cabin, made Cynthia's temper rise. She jumped from the car and ran up the path and porch steps. At her peremptory knock, a dog inside barked excitedly. The upper half of the plank door swung back. A young man with unruly reddish hair looked out at her. The strings of a checkered apron were tied around his brown neck, and he held a frying pan in his hand. When he saw Cynthia, he jerked a stubby pipe from his wide mouth.

"Give me my dog!" she demanded.

At the sound of her voice, a wire-haired terrier dashed explosively against the closed half of the door. The girl leaned over and burst into a cascade of endearments, to which the dog responded with leaps and yelps. Cynthia could not get near enough to touch it. The young man was blocking the way.

"Who are you?" he shouted above the uproar.

"I'm Cynthia Widdemer!" she shouted back. "And I want my dog!"

"So pleased to meet you!" he said in a loud tone of insulting unbelief.

"I've often heard—and who hasn't?—of John Widdemer's daughter."

Cynthia sniffed.

The young man went on sarcastically, "I've read about her doings, too, in the society column. Highly interesting! I have even"—he gave his visitor an up-and-down glance—"seen her pictures in the rotogravure section. I must say she didn't resemble a yelling vixen with a silly hat over one eye and smears all over her face."

"Why, you ill-mannered idiot!" Cynthia longed to swing her fist into his ironical face. "I tell you I am Cynthia Widdemer. How dare you doubt my word?"

"Allow me to introduce myself—King Hamilton, the fourth. And this"—indicating the canine cyclone at his feet—"is my dog, Spot Hamilton."

"How ridiculous! He is my dog, and his name is Laddie. See!" Cynthia cried in triumph. "He is trying to get to me. Here, Laddie! Come, darling!"

The man pocketed his pipe and dropped the frying pan on the floor. He scooped up the dog and held the squirming, barking animal firmly under one arm.

"Perhaps," he said, "you'd better come in and explain, if you can, why a dog of yours would be left for three days in the pound. The poor fellow was breaking his heart with loneliness until I bailed him out this morning and brought him up here to go fishing."

He opened the lower half of the door and Cynthia darted in, reaching futilely for the dog.

"Fishing!" she spluttered, as the man backed away. "Laddie never goes fishing!"

"My dogs always go fishing with me," he replied, holding her at arm's length with one big brown hand

spread across the front of her sun-yellow sweater.

"You bully!" Cynthia's voice rose to a *fortissimo* of incredulous rage. "I tell you he's mine! Give him to me this instant!"

The obdurate other claimant motioned to the big fireplace that nearly filled one end of the cabin.

"If you will be seated," he said calmly, "we can talk this over reasonably, instead of screaming at each other like a couple of maniacs. My real name is Peter Bentley. You can tell me yours or not, as you wish."

Cynthia was trembling with anger. She plumped herself down on the comfortable couch before the fire. The blazing logs threw a flickering light over the redwood floor, the deep wicker chairs, a gun and fishing rods in a corner. The remainder of the room was lost in the creeping darkness.

The dog tried so frantically to get to the girl, that Peter had to clutch him with both hands.

"Put him down!" Cynthia challenged. "And just see which he chooses."

"Fair enough." Peter tossed the terrier on the floor.

There was a scrabble of claws on the bare boards, a rush and a leap, and the ecstatic dog was in Cynthia's lap. His bobbed tail wagged his delight, and his little body trembled with happiness.

"Laddie precious, I thought I'd never find you!" Cynthia was hugging her pet, kissing the top of his head, hugging down into his funny long face.

"I'll be getting on with my cooking," Peter said. He retrieved the frying pan. Cynthia's joy in the reunion with Laddie was interrupted by a whistle and a call. "Come, Spot! Come here, boy!"

The terrier hesitated, then jumped from the girl's arms and ran toward the man. In the middle of the floor he half turned, his tail wagging uncertainly. Peter whistled again. The dog trotted over to him and stood up with front paws against his knees.

"Let's stop this silly game!" Cynthia exclaimed. "It's getting dark. I'll take Laddie and go home. There's a long drive ahead of me after I get down the mountain. I have indulgent parents," she added, "but they do like me to check in for breakfast."

"Ah, yes, the Widdemers!" said Peter. He lighted a hanging lamp, which revealed a stove, sink, and small table. He peered at her and shook his head. "However, you see, I bought this dog for two dollars. I have the poundmaster's receipt. So now he belongs to me."

"Why, you couldn't begin to buy Laddie for two dollars!" cried Cynthia.

"Nevertheless, my purchase of Spot was a complete transaction. And a good bargain it was, too," he boasted, fondly twirling the terrier's ear.

Cynthia realized she was making no headway with this Peter Bentley. "If you," she said, struggling for composure, "are by any chance the son of Bentley & Son of the First National Bank of San Marco, you certainly are not living up to the nice things I've heard about you."

John Widdemer's daughter had had much practice in handling men, and believed she knew how to manage them. So far, with this one she had been too furious for diplomacy. Perhaps Peter could be cajoled by flattery, that second-best route to a male heart.

"Sorry to disappoint you," he replied coldly. "I'd hate to be those

things you heard about me, whatever they were. And I'm still waiting for your explanation about the dog pound."

Cynthia's eyes blazed. Flattery was out.

"All right!" she snapped. "It was like this: I was driving out to a luncheon at Las Ondas on Tuesday morning——"

"And this is Friday," Peter commented witheringly. He started to peel potatoes.

"Oh, don't interrupt!" Cynthia stamped her foot. "I stopped on the way to pick up a friend, and we put Laddie in the rumble seat. He often rides there; he loves it. He was wearing his collar, with a short leash fastened to the floor, so he couldn't possibly jump out."

"Couldn't have been Spot. He always rides in front where I can watch him."

"Keep still! My friend got out at Glenville and took the train. I looked around to see if Laddie was all right, and he was sitting there then perfectly contented."

Peter selected a second potato. "So what?"

"So, smart Aleck, I was in a hurry and I didn't take him up front. I didn't look back again until I'd driven through three or four towns. At Medina I found the clasp of the collar broken, and Laddie was gone. I searched there and in neighboring places, and advertised, for three days. I didn't inquire in Glenville until this afternoon, because I felt absolutely sure he was in the rumble seat when I left the railroad station. He must have jumped out as I started off."

The man rinsed the peeled potatoes, dried his hands on the checkered apron, and gave the terrier a sympathetic pat. He reserved comment on Cynthia's story

"But now," she finished triumphantly, "I've got him." She stood up, adjusted her hat at a more rakish angle, and called the dog, who had been trotting happily back and forth between her and Peter. "Come, Laddie!" The girl sorted two one-dollar bills from the crumpled wad in her purse and tendered them to the man.

Peter did not see the money. He picked up the terrier, strode to the door, and dropped him out.

Returning, he said, "You don't deserve to own a dog. You're too careless."

Cynthia sank into a chair. She did not know the meaning of defeat, yet momentarily she was at a loss. Then her backbone stiffened for a real battle.

"I will not leave," she declared, "until I get Laddie."

"Fine! You might set the table."

Peter expertly sliced the potatoes into the frying pan, which he placed on the oil stove. He added a chunk of butter, and a plentiful sprinkling of onion, salt and pepper. He lighted the burner and commenced stirring.

Cynthia decided cannily that Peter Bentley would be more impressed by a girl who would cooperate with getting supper than by one who flopped helplessly and looked on, while the big, strong man did things. She could be either type successfully, as circumstances might suggest.

She had not noticed all the interior of the cabin before. Now she discovered that there was another door opposite the one she had entered. Peter whisked out of it, reappearing an instant later with a large skillet full of trout ready for frying. Through the open door, Cynthia heard the sound of a brook.



Pine trees were darkly silhouetted against a deep-blue sky.

Peter gestured graciously with the pan of fish. "Over there by the fireplace," he pointed, "is the drawing-room. In this corner are the kitchen and dining room. Along that wall is the bedroom. You are welcome to stay over the week-

Cynthia realized she was making no headway with Peter Bentley. So far, she had been too furious to use diplomacy with him. Perhaps he could be cajoled by flattery, that second-best route to a male heart.

end, a fortnight, or a month even."

Cynthia closed her red lips stubbornly upon shrieks of frustration, and an assortment of names she would be happy to call Peter Bentley. Her tactics thus far had won her nothing. She made a diametrical shift of plans. She would try the

new psychology. She would radiate kindness and generosity, which, theoretically, should encircle this room in record time, bringing back to her generosity and kindness augmented a hundredfold.

While Peter continued his cooking, paying no attention to her, Cynthia washed at the sink and carefully made up her face before a little wall mirror. Then she found a tablecloth in a cupboard. From the shelves she chose blue-red-and-orange pottery dishes and set the table with them. She added silver-and-red-striped water tumblers. Everything about the place, she observed, was in perfect order. All its simple furnishing were right for a mountain cabin. She glanced at Peter, busy at the stove, and wondered about many things.

The coffee was percolating fragrantly. And single-mindedly intent upon his skillets, the man seemed oblivious of everything but the frying fish and potatoes. The girl wandered out to the stream. Although he had appeared to pay no attention to her, Peter whistled the dog in as Cynthia crossed the doorstep.

She saw a hammock suspended between two trees, looked at the full moon, and thought, "What a night! And utterly wasted!"

When Cynthia returned, Peter was heaping three plates with the most delicious-smelling food in the world. He kept two of them hot on the stove while he painstakingly boned a trout on the third.

"Who's that one for?" Cynthia inquired.

"Spot, of course!" He put the plate on the porch and left the little dog in a seventh heaven of high living.

Cynthia leaped for the door. "Laddie mustn't eat those things! They'll make him ill!"

Peter stretched a large brown hand toward her menacingly. With the other he pulled out a chair from the table for Cynthia. She sat down, and the new psychology blew up with a bang.

"Don't you know, idiot," she said, "that a carefully raised dog like Laddie has to have especially prepared food?"

Peter seated himself opposite Cynthia and paused long enough to reply, "I'll say this food was specially prepared, and by a swell cook too! Gosh, I'm hungry!" He picked up his knife and fork. "Sail into it, sister!"

"I won't eat a morsel!" Cynthia said defiantly.

"Good! I'd planned to eat all this myself. Wasn't expecting a week-end guest."

He seemed to forget her then, and devoted his entire interest to fish, potatoes, and coffee.

The long drive, the crisp mountain air, and the strain on her emotions combined to make Cynthia faint with hunger as she glared at her plate. She was so exasperated she flushed through her rouge as she started on her trout.

Peter looked up from his food. "Never eat when you are angry," he advised paternally. "Gives you dyspepsia."

She ignored him.

The food was consumed in silence. Afterward, Peter offered his guest a cigarette, which she took without a word. He lighted hers and his own. They smoked, and smudged the stubs on their empty plates. Both mute, they cleared the table together. Then Cynthia went to the fireplace and sat down decisively. Peter washed the dishes and put them in a rack to dry. The terrier had come in from his feasting and was asleep on the hearth rug.

Cynthia was still sitting by the fire, seemingly absorbed in a magazine when Peter came over. He found another magazine, drew up a second deep chair, and companionably settled himself beside her. There was no break in the silence.

A soothing stillness drifted down over the cabin, so that Cynthia could hear quite clearly the eager rush of the brook and the soft wind through the pines. Now and then Laddie barked in his sleep.

"Those fried potatoes!" Cynthia thought anxiously.

After a rather long time, Peter tossed aside his magazine, yawned and stretched.

"We could be celebrating the end of our honeymoon," he remarked, his glance taking in the domesticity of the scene. As Cynthia had nothing to say on the subject, he dropped it, too. He got to his feet, stretched again, and said, "Let's call it a day. I'm going to bed."

Cynthia's only indication that she had heard him was a look at her wrist watch. Six minutes past ten. She wondered when it would be daylight up here. Probably soon after four.

Peter went out into the moonlight. In a few minutes he brought back a log to keep the fire smoldering through the night. He bolted the doors, then took two pairs of pajamas out of a drawer. From the corner of an alarmed eye, Cynthia saw him toss one pair on the upper of the built-in bunks. The other pajamas he spread across the lower bed, and made a hospitable gesture.

"For you," he said. She saw him contrast her small, slim figure with the man-size sleeping suit. He chuckled, "I'm providing for you very generously, but that's my way."

Peter placed a chair, measuring

with his eye the distance from it to the head of the top bunk. He changed its position slightly two or three times, until he was satisfied. "What's that for?" she asked.

"To put my clothes on."

"You don't mean to tell me you're going to undress?" she cried.

"Why, certainly!" he returned, surprised. "I always undress when I go to bed. Don't you? Good night." He climbed nimbly up.

"You—you big mountain goat!"

Cynthia's voice was trembling.

She looked at Peter. He removed a handkerchief, watch and wallet from the pockets of his coat, then took it off. Cynthia realized the only place in the room that would not give her a view of the goings-on in the upper bunk was the lower one. He was unbuttoning his shirt now.

With what dignity she could summon, Cynthia crossed to the beds, and drew herself up in the exact middle of the quilted spread on hers. There she huddled, hugging her knees, while Peter's coat flew past and hung itself with surprising accuracy over the back of the chair. Two heavy, large shoes, one after the other, clattered neatly underneath the chair. Shirt, trousers, socks and shorts followed. There was an audible long yawn above her, a hunching about, and finally, silence.

For a long time Cynthia sat motionless. She strained to find a way out of her predicament. Her muscles ached with tension and when the fire died down, she became thoroughly chilled. All at once she made a decision.

"I won't allow him to be more comfortable than I am," she said to herself.

Swiftly, she pulled her yellow sweater over her head and slipped

out of her dress. Shoes, stockings and underwear were off in a moment. She slid her tired body into Peter's pajamas, then under the blankets. Idly, she watched the dying fire. Her confused feelings were a strange mixture of curiosity and resentment against Peter Bentley.

After a while, a possible way of escape with Laddie occurred to her. Peter either was very sound asleep or pretending. She would have to wait long enough to be sure. Restful murmuring sounds came from outside. She hardly could keep awake, herself.

Through an open window, the moonlight poured and flowed into a pool on the floor. How perfect all this would be if only— Cynthia drowsed over a half-formed, ridiculous wish that Peter had not been able to go to sleep because his heart was pounding, and that he would lean down from his bunk and talk to her.

She must have been asleep for hours, she thought, when she heard Laddie whining and scratching at the door. Cynthia sat up in bed quickly, amazed that she had not stayed awake. She had meant to be so alert. She listened, and heard regular, slow breathing in the upper bunk.

Stealthily, Cynthia slipped from under the covers. She reached for her small pile of clothes. As she swung her bare feet down to the floor, the touch of the cold boards made her gasp. She clapped her hand over her mouth, and tiptoed toward the table where she had left her hat and purse. A broad moonbeam, just beyond, lighted the room.

"Where do you think you are going?"

Cynthia was startled, perhaps less by the voice than by the realization

that she was silhouetted against the lunar radiance. She jumped away from the shaft of moonlight and clutched her clothes in front of her. She looked up. Peter was leaning down from his bunk.

"Laddie wants to go out," Cynthia said with a quaver in her voice that made her suddenly furious at the man who caused it.

"It would be dangerous for you to drive down the mountain at night. Let me have your car keys, please, and your clothes."

"I will not!"

One bare foot was thrust out from Peter's blankets. Cynthia jerked the keys from her purse and threw the ring viciously. Peter caught the keys and reached for the bundle she hurled next. Cynthia took four strides to her bunk, snatched a quilt and whisked it around her. Then she went to the back door and unlocked it. She followed the barking dog into the whispering night.

She would not be able to go to sleep again, but she would lie in the hammock with Laddie and wait for morning out there. Cynthia whistled for the dog. He had run around the corner of the cabin. She heard a step behind her as she passed a high pile of cordwood. As the girl turned in fright, she caught a glimpse of two burly men. She started to scream. One man throttled Cynthia while the other threw a suffocating, coarse cloth over her head.

The pressure at her throat was not relaxed. Her arms were free for a moment, and she fought her captors blindly with both hands. She was strangling. Her desperate struggles weakened. There was a roaring in her ears, but she could hear Laddie barking frantically as she was roughly swung off her feet and carried over uneven ground. Then the



One man throttled Cynthia while the other threw a suffocating cloth over her head. Her arms were free for a moment, and she fought her captors blindly, but to no avail.

ripping crashes of gunshots just above her, deafened Cynthia to all other sounds. The man who gripped her shoulders let go his hold, and she dropped. Her head struck something hard. Through a daze, she heard curses and yells. Then she rolled over unconscious.

When Cynthia came back to a vague knowledge of her surround-

ings, her swimming senses did not recognize at first the man who sat beside her on a bed. His head was bent close to her face. She thought he was one of her brutal captors, and she shrank from him in terror. Her widened eyes discovered Peter, looking at her anxiously. Cynthia stared about incredulously. She was in her bunk, under the warm blankets. A bandage swathed her head. She reached out her hand and touched the man in bathrobe and pajamas, to make sure he was real, and really Peter. She closed her eyes, then blinked them open again. He hadn't gone. It was very comforting to have him so near. For a moment, Cynthia sank back into that comfort as into a perfect dream. Then she sat up quickly.

"Oh, Peter!" she cried. "Those shots! Are you all right?"

"Righter than I ever was," he declared. But she felt him for reassurance. "Not a bullet touched me, and it's all over, Cynthia."

"You know, Peter"—she shivered and leaned lightly against him—"I've been guarded from babyhood against kidnapers, but I never really believed I was in any danger. Lately, I've been so bored with male nursemaids following me about, I've escaped whenever I could. I must have slipped away from them when I drove to Glendale and up here."

"Well, the kidnapers slipped away from me, too. I didn't follow them when they ran down the road because I was afraid you had been badly hurt. You lay so still after they dropped you."

Cynthia clutched at his hand. "They might come back!"

Peter shook his head. "I watched the headlights of their car. They cleared out. One has a bullet through his shoulder and the other sure got his manly beauty spoiled.

I broke his nose." He hesitated, then smiled a bit shamefacedly and pulled his hand away. "So you really were Cynthia Widdemer all the time!"

"Of course, silly! I could have shown you my driver's license, but I was so darn mad at you I never thought of it."

"You had a right to be," he admitted. He moved a little nearer, with a different kind of smile. "But I don't care who you are, spitfire! You're all right!"

"Oh, Peter," she cried impulsively, "I can't thank you enough! You've saved me from such a terrible ordeal. Why, it would have nearly killed my mother."

Cynthia shuddered at the thought. Peter put his arm around her and held her close, as though to protect her against all future perils. It was good to lean on his shoulder.

Just then, there was a whimpering sound by the fireplace. Cynthia grew taut.

"What's wrong with Laddie?" she asked in a frightened voice.

Peter went over and picked up the grocery box in which the little dog was resting luxuriously on folded woolly blankets. He brought the crib to Cynthia and set it on the edge of her bunk. One of Laddie's legs was expertly bandaged. His abbreviated tail was wagging joyously. His dark eyes were eloquent with devotion as he looked from Peter to Cynthia, from Cynthia to Peter.

"How was he hurt?" she said. "The poor darling!"

"He ran to protect you, and one of the kidnapers hit him with a gun. His leg was bruised, but not broken. He'll limp for a few days, that's all."

"You've been good to Laddie, Peter. Rescuing him from the pound, bringing him up here, feed-

ing him so well, and doctoring him."

Cynthia's hand lay caressingly on the dog's head, and Peter's big palm covered it.

"Nothing's too good for a faithful fellow like Laddie," Peter said.

Cynthia smiled her appreciation of his use of the name. She turned her hand so that her palm lay under Peter's. The dog looked brightly from one to the other.

"I think this is the time for a confession," Peter began, holding her hand more tightly. "I didn't really buy Laddie. I just bailed him out for a couple of dollars. They can't sell a dog at the pound until ten days after he is brought there. I hoped no one would have claimed him when the ten days were up."

"But you——" Cynthia frowned. "I thought probably you didn't know about the law. I wouldn't let you drive down the mountain after dark, and I took the only way I knew of to keep you."

"You did make a fool of me, Peter!" she accused with mock severity. "I suppose, though, I'll have to forgive you now." She bent over and rested her soft cheek on the dog's head. "On Laddie's account—he likes you so. But what a predicament we've gotten him into! How can he be faithful to us both?"

Peter did not reply immediately. Had he looked at Cynthia just at

that moment, he would have noticed that the pulse in her throat was beating very fast. He carried the dog back to his place by the fire. When he came back to answer her question, her eyes were filled with a deep tenderness.

"I know a way," said Peter. "As soon as the sun comes up, let's you and me and Laddie drive down to Glenville and get married."

"That idea," boasted Cynthia, "occurred to me hours and hours ago." She lifted her face. "I really believe the man's going to kiss me at last."

Peter's reply, though wordless, was altogether satisfactory.

When, finally, he let her go, breathless and radiant, she demanded laughingly: "Sure you're not proposing to me because you want Laddie?"

He grabbed her fiercely, and kissed her again.

"Now let that teach you a lesson," he rebuked mockingly. "I adore you, you heart-burglar, but after all, if it weren't for Laddie——" He paused to brush her hair with his lips.

Cynthia sighed happily. "Good old Laddie," she whispered against his shoulder. "Cupid has nothing on him!" and snuggled closer to Peter as his arms tightened around her.





“Unhappy The Bride—”

By Helen Brehm Long

UNHAPPY the bride the rain falls on,” ran the old saying, but Dolores Raeburn dismissed it as a myth.

Tall, dark and lovely, she stood in her white wedding gown, her lace veil caught mantilla-wise with pearls and orange blossoms above her face, radiant with starry, expectant eyes.

The thunderstorm outside, the beating rain did not matter so long as her heart was gloriously sunny.

“You never looked more beautiful,” said Phil Townsend, strangling a little over the words. “I wish that——”

Dolores’s eyes clouded. She knew what he wished—that he was the bridegroom instead of Harry Whittingham; that he could stand at her side before the altar, instead of being called in merely to photograph her a few minutes before the ceremony began.

"I'm sorry, Phil," she murmured gently, not wanting any one to be unhappy on the most important day of her life—least of all this tall, handsome lad she had grown up with, who had been her girlhood sweetheart.

He straightened the folds of oyster-white crêpe about her satin-shod feet. "I'm not going to make a scene, don't worry," he told her bitterly. "But I took it for granted things were understood between us, that you'd wait until I came back home from the East. I didn't expect you to marry the first traveling salesman boarding at your aunt's house that asked you!"

She smiled a little. He was not the first traveling salesman who had asked her to marry him, certainly, during the years she had helped Aunt Mary with the boarding house. But from the moment Harry Whittingham had set down his expensive pigskin bags in the front hall, and looked her over audaciously, she had known they were to have a love affair.

That it had turned out happily still seemed something of a miracle to her. Harry had known so many girls, had loved and left so many times! When she did his room, she was awed and depressed by the photographers of the lovely women hung on the wall or carelessly jammed into his table drawer.

There was one more lovely than the rest which, for a long while, had been enshrined in an expensive gold frame on his dresser. On it was written, "Lovingly, Eleanor," and the tinted photograph showed Eleanor's eyes to be azure-blue, her hair silver-gilt, curling. There was grace in the turn of her slender neck, lure in the shape of her lips.

In Dolores's gypsy-dark beauty, there was also grace and lure, and

she meant that this photograph should surpass any of Harry's collections—should surpass, above all, "Lovingly, Eleanor."

There was a crack of lightning, and a flash from Phil's camera connection with the wall socket. But Dolores stood still, afraid of nothing, confident that she loved and was loved, that nothing could harm her on her wedding day.

"I have nothing against him personally," Phil shrugged. "I just don't like that washed-out face of his, and he's not good enough for you!"

Washed-out face! It was a term only a jealous lover could apply to Harry's distinguished pallor. Dolores was less angry than amused, but sorry for Phil, too.

"You'll find another girl, Phil. You'll forget me."

"Perhaps I don't forget as easily as you do."

"You like Jessica, don't you? And she's in love with you. Oh, I do think her red hair is stunning."

Phil's good-looking face flushed. "Leave Jessica out of this. You know the type of girl I like best, and if you don't, this photograph will show you. I'm ready."

She smiled into the camera. Too bad the day was so stormy, she mused. She had wanted to be photographed outside the house, by the bridal-wreath bush that was now in full bloom.

"Dolores!" Phil's voice was so hoarse and desperate, that she gave an involuntary start of alarm. "Oh, my darling, call this wedding off before it's too late!"

"Are you out of your mind?"

"I suppose I am—with jealousy. But it's not only that. I want you to be happy, and Harry's not the kind to make a woman happy. A small-town *Don Juan*, that's all he

is. You haven't had enough experience with men to recognize the sort of person he is."

"How dare you? Do you realize you're speaking of my fiancé? I asked you here to photograph me, not to tell me what you think of my future husband."

"But I've got to tell you, and this is the only chance I'll have before it's too late."

"I shan't listen to you," she said firmly.

"Oh, yes, you will," he answered, just as firmly. "I've something to tell you before I take the next picture, and I'm going to. Louise Baker talked to me about him and——"

"Then it must be so!" interrupted Dolores, scornfully. "Louise wanted him herself. Had it occurred to you that she might be prejudiced?"

"It occurred to me that Louise used to live in Murfreesport, and that's one of the towns he makes. He had a girl over there that Louise knew. I said he was a lady-killer. He was that, literally. He didn't treat this girl right, and she committed suicide. Her name was Eleanor Lansing."

Eleanor? The "Eleanor" of the picture? Dolores's hand flew to her heart in a quick, defenseless gesture. If the beautiful Eleanor were dead, the strongest menace to her happiness was removed, but at what a price!

"She threw herself in the Pawnee River," Phil was going on. "Her body wasn't found until spring. But that's the kind of man you're marrying, Dolores—a heartbreaker, a jilt, with another girl's death on his hands."

Dolores tossed her head. "I don't believe a word of that story. You probably invented the whole thing."

Phil's face grew grim. "You can't really think that of me, Dolores."

No, Phil always told the truth. He was sometimes brutally honest—too much so, to be as popular with women as Harry was.

"But you don't know the whole story," she protested, and even if some of the facts do happen to be true, Louise may have misrepresented them. Perhaps this girl had done something, committed some crime, and that was why he wouldn't marry her. And maybe that was why she killed herself."

"If I were you," said Phil, "I'd ask him for the whole story before I gave myself into his keeping."

"I won't," blazed Dolores. "I trust Harry. I know he's had lots of girls, but I know that he's true to me now. He's an honorable man, which is more than I can say for you, Phil Townsend, coming here on my wedding night, behind his back, when he has no chance to defend himself, with this trumped-up scandal."

"I should have known you'd take it that way," sighed Phil, wearily. "Well, try to look like a happy bride, and I'll take the last picture."

"You've done your best to make me look like a happy bride, haven't you?" she asked. But soon she was smiling into the camera, with all the old self-confidence and soft radiance. The name Eleanor had distressed her for a moment in Phil's story, but there must be thousands of Eleanors in the world, and Harry himself had probably known dozens.

The flashlight boomed again. Phil pulled the plate out and demanded savagely, "What do you take me for—an iron man? Why couldn't you have called somebody else to take your picture in your wedding gown?" Before she could protest, he seized her in an almost



The girl gave a short laugh. "You want me to come back later; after the knot is tied, eh? No, my dear girl. I timed myself to arrive at the proper moment to prevent this ceremony."

brutal embrace and kissed her squarely on the mouth half a dozen times, then flung her from him, a bitter expression on his face. "Now, I never want to see you again as long as I live!"

She wavered toward him with a weak gasp. "Phil!"

"I've loved you as much as a man could love a girl. I didn't have fancy words to say it in, but it's the truth. I didn't buy you an engage-

ment ring, so of course, there was nothing to bind you to me. I took too much for granted. I see that now. But it's all over, because——"

"Because?" Dolores's voice was breathless.

"Because to-night's my wedding night, too. I'm marrying Jessica!"

He hurried out of the house, and Dolores sank into a chair, exhausted. Phil was no longer to be classed as a boyhood sweetheart. He was a man, with all a man's passion and ardor. He had never kissed her that way before. No one had ever kissed her quite that way before—not even Harry.

Two minutes later, Dolores's aunt found her still sitting in the chair, tears in her eyes. "Why, Dolores, what's the matter? This storm must have gotten on your nerves."

Lightning flashed. Aunt Mary shuddered. "I wonder if this storm could be a bad sign."

"Perhaps we ought to postpone the wedding," Dolores faltered.

Aunt Mary shook her head. "We're both just a little nervous. You don't get married every day! Now just relax while I go down to the kitchen again. Harry will be here any minute, and you won't want him to see that you've been crying."

In the few seconds that Dolores was left alone, her caller came.

How the girl got past the maid, and into the first-floor bedroom, Dolores never knew. She assumed, when she saw the drab figure standing before her, that here was one of the women hired to assist in the kitchen, who had come in the front way by mistake.

But when the woman raised her face, Dolores uttered a shrill scream. The wet garments, the wispy hair, the haunted look in those blue eyes—was it a ghost?

"I'm Eleanor Lansing," said the figure before her, in a weary, remote voice.

"I know," replied Dolores wildly. "I've seen your picture. But I thought—I was told—that you were dead."

Eleanor Lansing smiled wanly. "It was another body they found, not mine. I let them go on thinking I was dead. There was no reason to do otherwise, until now."

"Until now," shivered Dolores. Eleanor Lansing had come back to stop the wedding, to ruin her life. "We can't stand here talking. Won't you come back later?"

"Not very hospitable, are you?"

"In another hour——"

"After the knot is tied, eh?"

There was a short laugh. "No, my dear girl. I timed myself to arrive at the proper moment to prevent this ceremony."

Dolores mustered her self-control. "Let's go some place where we can talk privately. I don't want my aunt to overhear. But where? Every corner is full of people. The guests are arriving. Oh, yes, the tool house back of the garage. Please come with me, Miss Lansing."

Eleanor Lansing followed silently. "Here," directed Dolores. "There's the arbor to keep the rain off us. Come along."

They stepped into the tiny cupboard adjoining the garage. There was no window, and Dolores felt safe in switching on a light. "Sit down if you like," she suggested tersely. "It's probably dusty, so I'll stand."

"You had better," commented Eleanor. "That's a lovely dress and you're lovely in it. Mine was white satin, and my veil was net, but"—her voice changed—"I never wore it."

"I know, I know," protested Dolores hurriedly. "You needn't tell me. I know the whole story."

"Did Harry tell you?" asked Eleanor.

"A friend did. Or he was a friend, until then."

"And you still want to go on with it, you little fool?"

"Yes, of course I do. Harry's past means nothing to me. I love him. Don't you understand that?"

"Of course I understand. I loved him, too." The mackintosh Eleanor Lansing wore had slipped off her shoulders, and she flung her beret aside. Dolores now saw, with a kind of envious chagrin, that she was not drab, as she had at first appeared, nor old, but breathlessly beautiful. Drops of water shone like crystals in the misty ash-blond hair that framed a face the photograph had done scant justice to. She wore a simple blue street dress, but it was the exact color of her eyes, and fitted close to her slender figure. Beside her, even in her wedding finery, Dolores felt her own beauty fading in comparison. Oh, she had a certain prettiness, a certain distinction, and the fire of youth, but Eleanor had so much more.

Eleanor was saying, "In spite of your silly reckless opposition, I intend to prevent this wedding."

And she would! The conviction came to Dolores that of all his women friends, Harry had never gotten over caring for this one. Her picture hadn't been jammed in a table drawer. And now she had come back to exert the old spell. The wedding would be called off, Harry lost to her. The disgrace of being deserted at the altar was something she could not bear even to think about. What a chance for Phil Townsend to say, "I told you so!"

"After all," Eleanor continued, "you're young. You'll get over it."

Get over it? That was the last straw, and Dolores was goaded to unreasoning anger.

With a swift motion, she switched off the light bulb, ran out the tool-house door, flung herself against it, and bolted it tight, before Eleanor Lansing had time to call out. Let her call! The thunderstorm would serve some purpose; she would never be heard!

"Dolores, where have you been?" exclaimed her aunt, appearing through the veranda door. "Harry thought he'd been deserted." And as Dolores panted for breath, "Why, you've torn your dress—the very worst luck a bride can have! Let me mend it quickly!"

With her heart plunging madly, and her ear tensed for an alarm from the tool house, Dolores stood quietly while the repairs were made. In the living room, Harry was waiting for her, and a violin was playing, "Oh, Promise Me."

Dolores did not feel safe until they had started on their honeymoon in Harry's smart sports roadster. Every minute of the ceremony, she had expected Eleanor to appear and denounce her. The wild color in her cheeks gave her added beauty, but never, she was sure, had there been a more nervous bride.

Harry noticed it. "Why, darling, you're trembling. Not sorry you married me, are you?"

"It isn't that, dear." She huddled far over in the corner of the seat away from him.

"We're going to be very happy together, sweetheart. You were the most beautiful bride the sun ever shone on, or rather the lightning ever flashed on," Harry murmured.

Dolores raised a worried face.

"You love me more than any one in the world, don't you, Harry?"

"Of course I do, darling. Why do you ask?"

"Harry, tell me the truth. Eleanor Lansing doesn't mean anything to you any more, does she?"

"Eleanor Lansing?" At the sound of the name, he almost lost control of the steering wheel. The car skidded perilously. "I didn't know you'd ever heard of her."

"I have. And I can't be happy, Harry, until you tell me I mean more to you than she does, or did."

He hesitated only a second. "Why, sweetheart, I'd almost forgotten there was an Eleanor Lansing."

"But you did love her at one time?"

He smiled down at her, his old self again. "You didn't expect to be the first woman in my life, did you, honey?"

"No, I knew you'd had other affairs."

"Affairs, yes. But I married you. What more do you want?"

What more, indeed? She moved closer to him. He was so handsome, so debonair. Small wonder if he was the *Don Juan* Phil had accused him of being!

Rain swept over the car in sheets, the wind howled, and they could see only a few feet ahead. That was why they did not see the machine parked ahead of them in the road, until they were almost upon it. A man was trying to wave them to a halt.

"Some one's hurt," was Dolores's first reaction. "They've skidded across the road, and look at that embankment!"

"It's a holdup," growled Harry under his breath.

"Surely you'll stop. You won't run that man down!"

"Of course not!" He returned, and pressed his foot on the gas. The man in the road leaped aside just in time to avoid being struck. But Harry had swerved too much. They were going over!

It seemed that death raced to meet them as they went over the muddy embankment. Dolores shut her eyes, and the car turned turtle, plunging, slithering down the slope.

In the final crash, they both shot free, and rolled onto soft earth. Dolores, covered with mud, and dazed, crept to where Harry lay still, a mere bundle of clothes.

There were voices on the road above her. A man scrambled down the hill, lifted her to her feet. "Are you hurt, darling?"

It was Phil. Suddenly, she realized that it must have been he who had made the fruitless attempt to wave them to a halt. "You did this," she screamed at him above the storm.

"I never dreamed he wouldn't stop, that he'd try to run me down. Forgive me, darling, but I had to see you."

"You've seen me. You see me now. I hope you're satisfied. My husband's dead. You killed him. Oh, I hate you, Phil Townsend."

"You don't understand, Dolores. I had to get to you before the police did."

Then Eleanor had been found in the tool shed. What of it? Locking her up wasn't so serious that the police would follow a honeymoon couple very far. She flashed a look of contempt at Phil and turned away.

Harry Whittingham was not instantly killed, as Dolores had supposed. An emergency operation was necessary, and he hovered critically on the border line between life and



Harry's face was convulsed with emotion. He caught her arm fiercely. "Eleanor is alive? Where is she? Where is she, you fool!" Dolores knew then that Harry hadn't forgotten Eleanor, that he still loved her.

death. With each passing moment, Dolores vowed vengeance on the man who had been responsible for the accident. Truth compelled her to admit that Harry had been at fault, too, in not stopping when signaled. Or perhaps it all went back to her locking Eleanor up.

Waiting outside the operating room, she was willing to take the blame for everything that had happened, if only she could be spared the grief of becoming a widow on her wedding night. Her clothes were drenched and ruined, but she was unhurt otherwise, and she refused to

change or to accept a hospital bed. A sympathetic nurse loaned her a bath robe, and went on to a more serious emergency case. It was a bad night for auto accidents, she remarked kindly, with a pitying glance at Dolores's tear-streaked face.

But the new emergency was not an auto accident case. Dolores did not see Eleanor Lansing brought to the hospital, but she learned the identity of the new casualty when Sheriff Homan touched her gently on the shoulder. Phil Townsend was with him, white-faced, hollow-eyed, almost as muddy as Dolores.

Dolores looked through and beyond him to the sheriff. "Did you want to see me about something—the accident?"

"Not the accident. It's this." He hesitated. "A girl named Eleanor Lansing was found locked in the tool shed next to your garage. What do you know about it?"

Phil was making frantic signals to silence her, but she ignored them. "All about it. I locked her there myself."

The sheriff's heavy eyebrows went up. "Townsend, here, says you didn't have a chance to—that he was photographing you until a few minutes before the ceremony, that you had on your wedding dress and wouldn't have gone out there in the rain."

"I was with her until the music began. She couldn't possibly have got to the tool shed and back before the ceremony, without my seeing her," lied Phil earnestly.

"But I did."

Homan turned his attention to her. "Why did you want to get rid of Eleanor Lansing?"

"Because she was threatening my happiness. She was an old flame of my—my husband's. She came back here to stop our marriage."

Phil groaned. Not for several seconds did Dolores realize the meaning of that groan—not until Sheriff Homan said slowly, "So you struck her over the head with a blunt instrument!"

Dolores shrieked faintly, her nerves already strained to the breaking point. "Oh, no! Of course I didn't!"

"Somebody did. She says it was you. She says you knocked her down and locked her in. She's in the next ward, concussion of the brain. She may die. It's pretty serious, this charge against you, young lady."

The full horror of her situation swept over Dolores for the first time. Futilely, Phil had tried to provide her with an air-tight alibi; she had scorned it. He had come careening through the rainy night in pursuit of her, not to bring her back to face a trifling charge in connection with Eleanor's imprisonment in the tool house, but to keep her from being accused of murder. Loyally he had lied for her, even after she had refused to speak to him, and it was her own fault if her wedding night ended in jail!

Loyally, Phil went on lying. "Dolores isn't herself. She doesn't remember what happened."

"I'd say she remembers pretty well," retorted Homan sarcastically.

"Even if she did lock her in the tool shed, I'm sure she didn't strike her." Phil took her by the elbow urgently. "Isn't it possible that when she rattled the door trying to get out, one of the tools fell and struck her?"

"Possible, yes. We'll make a thorough investigation."

"Don't ask Dolores any more questions to-night. Her husband's been hurt, perhaps fatally. She's on

the verge of collapse. Besides, I'm positive she had nothing to do with Eleanor Lansing's accident."

The sheriff was not so positive. "Well, I can't take your word for it. I've already caught you in lies, attempting to protect her. We'll have to give Miss Lansing's statement pretty serious consideration." Then, turning to Dolores, "If she dies, you may find yourself in a pretty serious predicament, young lady. Don't leave town under any circumstances. We want to be able to lay our hands on you when we need you."

It was Phil who took her home, broken, desperate, weeping silently. His arm about her was all gentleness. The lover was lost in the friend.

Days of patient waiting were rewarded. Harry was slowly recovering, and the day came when Dolores was allowed to see him. Newspapers had been kept from him, and he knew nothing of what had happened.

Paler than ever, his face almost as white as the bandage above it, Harry reached his hands out to her, smiling wanly. "Not much of a honeymoon for you, was it, Dolores?"

"Never mind about me, so long as you get well," she said, sitting quietly beside him.

"What makes you look so glum?" he demanded. "You're not a very cheerful sick-room visitor, I must say."

She swallowed past the lump in her throat. "Harry, there's something besides your auto accident that's been on my mind." Then, impulsively, "If I did something dreadful, Harry, could you forgive me?"

"Depends upon what it was," he joked.

"I—I've a confession to make. I started to tell you the night of our wedding, then I hadn't the courage. We were talking about Eleanor Lansing. You said I couldn't expect to be the first woman in your life. I knew you had had affairs——"

He sat up abruptly. "Are you trying to tell me I couldn't expect to be the first man in your life, either? Bringing up my past affairs to excuse one of yours? Who is it? That pup Townsend? I might have known, the way he made free of your house at all hours——"

She almost hated him. "How dare you accuse me of such things? How dare you speak that way of Phil?"

"How dare I speak that way of Phil?" he mimicked. "I know something about women, my dear girl."

"You know something about some kinds, apparently not much about my kind. Oh, don't let's quarrel, Harry."

He subsided grumbly. "What's all this confession about, then?"

"Harry, the night of our wedding, Eleanor Lansing came to our house."

He leaned forward. "What?"

"Oh, you thought she was dead, I know, but she isn't. I saw her then. I talked with her."

"It's some impostor!" he shouted. "She's dead. She's drowned." His eyes were frenzied.

"I knew her from her picture. Besides, she told me who she was. She came to prevent our wedding."

Harry's face was convulsed with emotion. He caught her arm fiercely. "Eleanor is alive? Where is she?"

"You do love her after all. You haven't forgotten her," accused Dolores, reading his face.

"Where is she, you fool, where is she?"

"Something must have warned



me that you still loved her. Out of all your women friends, I recognized her as an enemy. That's why I—I locked her in the tool house. I couldn't let her spoil my wedding!"

"You what?" He tightened his grasp on her arm.

"You're hurting me." She pulled away from him.

"Stop gabbing and tell me where she is!"

"She's here in the hospital. She's been hurt. But you can't see her because she's still unconscious. She has concussion of the brain."

"In this hospital?"

"Harry, you mustn't get out of bed. Let me finish my story. I locked her in the tool house, and something fell and struck her on the head. Before she lost consciousness, she said I did it."

"Did you?" he inquired coldly.

"Of course not. Don't you have any faith in me at all? She came



The door opened suddenly and Phil burst in. Dolores caught her breath and stood motionless. Harry was with him! Dolores stared at Harry. He stared back at her. It seemed years ago that she had married him.

"Harry, you're too weak. You'll faint. You can't!"

"You can hardly prevent it." He was like a stranger to her.

"Harry, if she dies, I'll be accused of killing her. Doesn't that mean anything to you? Aren't you willing to stand by me when I need you?"

He was silent.

"Harry, whether you care anything about me or not, I'm your wife. You can't desert me, throw me off like this. I need you."

Still he did not answer, and a new suspicion shot through her.

"What is Eleanor Lansing to you that you would throw me over for her?"

He struck her aside harshly, brutally. "Eleanor Lansing is my legal wife."

Manslaughter—bigamy—Dolores shuddered as the words ran through her mind.

Harry had deserted her. He was out of the hospital, fully recovered, but he no longer lived at Aunt Mary's boarding house. He was living at the hotel, going to the hospital every day to see Eleanor, rumor said. But if Harry had deserted her, Phil still stood stanchly by.

They sat together in the quiet haven of Aunt Mary's parlor, there by the east window, where the altar had been erected for her wedding ceremony. That very piano had accompanied the violin that played "The Voice That Breathes O'er Eden."

"Poor little girl," murmured Phil. "I can never forget how happy you were that night—shining, radiant, as though none of the evils of life

to prevent our wedding. You can't blame me for not wanting that, but I never touched her."

"If you locked her up, you may have done more. I'm going to her."

could ever reach you; you were so far above them."

"I must have been out of my head, Phil. Why didn't I listen to her story? Why did I lock her up?"

He put his big protecting hand over hers. "You had courage; you've always had. That's why you're going to come through this ordeal with flying colors."

She shook her head. "Am I? If I could just get away from it all, but the sheriff warned me not to leave. I'm a prisoner in my own home—not that I want to get out on the streets, with everybody watching me, whispering about me. Oh, Phil, if she dies, I'm a murderer!"

Phil kissed her gently. It was a very different kiss from the one he had given her on her wedding night—that sudden flash of fire and passion she had not suspected, and that now seemed to have sputtered and died.

She could hardly believe her ears. Phil was saying, "If she lives, I want to marry you, Dolores, and take care of you. We'll go to another town. It will blow over."

"But you're engaged to Jessica. You told me that my wedding night was to be your wedding night!"

"You never thought I meant it, did you? I didn't have any intention of marrying her, or she me. I only told you that because I was so furiously jealous."

She took his face between her hands. "You're a darling, Phil. But I can't."

"I see." He looked away. Finally, he rose. "We'll still be friends, of course."

"Of course, Phil. I'll expect you to come to see me on visitor's day at the prison." Her lightness of tone, her laughter failed to be convincing.

"Poor little girl," sighed Phil again, and was gone, never guessing that Dolores was too proud to accept his pity where once she had had his love.

But he kept coming back, with books, flowers and magazines, to keep her mind occupied. He said no more about marriage.

Then, one day, he burst in triumphantly. Dolores caught her breath and stood motionless. Harry was with him!

"Good news, to-day, Dolores. Eleanor Lansing has regained consciousness. The doctors say she's definitely on the road to recovery."

"Oh!" Dolores stared at Harry. He stared back, somber-eyed, sulky. It seemed years ago that she had married him.

"More good news," Phil went on cheerfully. "I've brought Harry back to you."

Dolores was incredulous.

"Yes, I've come back," said Harry at last.

Slowly, coolly, Dolores's gaze swept the two men, fathoming the situation. "I see. Phil made you come back. It's kind of you, Phil, but I don't want him, nor any one else—that way."

Harry spoke up. "I'm sorry I acted like a cad, Dolores. But when you told me about Eleanor, I lost my head. I saw my—our whole future endangered by the scandal."

"So you walked out on Dolores," said Phil significantly.

"I'll spend the rest of my life making it up to you, Dolores," promised Harry. "Eleanor will divorce me. And I can explain everything. I should have before we were married."

"Suppose you do it now," urged Phil.

"Eleanor and I were secretly mar-

ried seven years ago. We quarreled. She left me—let people think she was dead, rather than live with me. I thought the body they found in the river was hers; every one did. She was legally dead, Dolores, you understand. I had a right to marry you after seven years had elapsed. But when she saw the announcement of our engagement, she came back, determined to prevent it."

"I wish she had," exclaimed Dolores passionately. "I wish I had let her!"

"Darling, don't say that! Eleanor will divorce me quietly. We can be married again as soon as she does. I love you."

But every word of it sounded insincere to her. He'd made love to so many women, she thought, that the words came automatically.

"I didn't really mean to let you down as I did. I was half crazy with the shock of finding out she was still alive, that she was right in the hospital with me. You mustn't blame me too much, Dolores."

"I'm not blaming you," she answered slowly. "But I no longer love you."

"Give me another chance, darling."

She shook her head. "You had your chance and you ran away. Maybe you loved me a little, but when a crisis came, you let me down. Perhaps I'm foolish, but the man I marry must love me more than that."

"Then it's good-by?"

"I'm afraid so." Silently, Harry left the room. Phil and Dolores watched him go. It was Phil who spoke first.

"Somehow, I feel sorry for him. I feel sorry for any man you turn down, Dolores."

"He didn't really care. You wouldn't have acted as he did. You'd have stood by. You have stood by."

Phil shrugged. "I'm nobody to pattern after. As a great lover, I'm a complete dud."

"Sure of that, Phil?" she asked softly.

"You know it. I'm not pale and romantic. I'm not a lady-killer. I can't think of mushy, romantic things to say. If I could, I'd say 'em, and take you in my arms."

"But you'd stand by the girl you loved, and fight for her happiness. You needn't say mushy, romantic things, darling, if you'll just take me in your arms."

"But you didn't want to marry me," he puzzled. "You turned me down."

"I couldn't let you offer your name through pity. I couldn't marry you until my name was cleared. But I knew all the time that I loved you."

"My darling!"

"I must have loved you a long while, Phil, and didn't know it," she sighed ecstatically, as he crushed her in his arms, his love shrouding her like a soft warm shawl. "When you kissed me after you photographed me, when you told me good-by forever, even then, I must have loved you. I had such forebodings of unhappiness, and the bottom seemed to fall out of everything. I believe that was the turning point in my life. Do you suppose you could kiss me that way again?"

"Could?" shouted Phil, in rapture. "Now, and all the rest of my life. How's this, and this, and this?"

But Dolores was too breathless to reply. All she did was to hold up her lips for more.



Campus Technique

By Rowena R. Farrar

PENELOPE WAINWRIGHT was experiencing the most devastatingly exciting moments of her coeducational life. The junior prom was in full swing in the gymnasium, which had been converted into a palatial ocean liner. The fact that Penny was getting a big rush was tame stuff. Ina's excited whispers, when they adjourned to the powder room, about her handsome cousin, Tim Rydings, flying down from Louisville, fell on preoccupied ears. Even the lovely melody which floated up from the orchestra failed to arouse her.

For Penny was approaching a big moment. Two big moments, to be exact. The Bancroft twins, Johnathan and Jackson, demanded that she make her choice to-night, and Penny was realizing the exasperating fact that a girl—even if she has been voted the campus queen—can't keep two college heroes at her beck and call indefinitely. But Penny was clever at the impossible.

She raced Ina down the stairs and almost fell into Jack Bancroft's waiting arms. They floated gracefully around the floor in significant silence. Penny mulled over her

problem. To have twins in love with you was the crowning distinction, especially such handsome blond twins as John and Jack Bancroft. They were easily the most popular men on the campus, outstanding athletes, wonderful dancers, dashing dressers and extravagant spenders. All the girls envied Penny her double conquest. But now she was on the spot. She had to choose between them.

She peered over Jack's broad shoulder and smiled sweetly into John's blue eyes, which she knew had been following her every move. Interpreting her smile as a signal, John crossed the floor and took her away from his brother. She slid from one pair of Bancroft arms into the other with graceful ease, for she had been doing just that all year.

"It's moonlight for us," John whispered, skirting the dancers and practically shoving Penny out the door.

Penny sighed dramatically. Together they sniffed the fragrant honeysuckles, glimpsed the bright moon, then slipped into John's smooth blue roadster and shot out the highway. Presently the car buried its nose under an elm on the side of the road. John Bancroft drew a tense Penny a little bit closer.

"I'm waiting for the verdict, judge," he exclaimed. "Do you love Jack or do you love me?"

Penny rolled her handkerchief into a tight ball. She trembled with excitement. "I—I love you, John," she stammered, "but—there's something—"

Before she could make her little speech, John grabbed her with strong young arms. "If you love me," he exulted, "that's all I want to know."

Somehow Penny squirmed out of his grasp. "Wait—please wait,

John," she insisted, avoiding his ardent gaze. "You simply must listen to what I have to say."

"I'm sure it isn't terribly important, Penny. Nothing matters now except your love. I'm sorry for Jack, of course, but one of us had to lose," he said magnanimously.

"Please let me do the talking," Penny commanded. "What I have to say is very important. At least it would be to the average man, but you're so superior and all, perhaps— Oh, I'm probably making a grave mistake, but I—I think you have a right to know that—that Jack and I—well, a girl has to have one affair before she marries, and I felt it fair that you should know the truth." Penny emitted a deep sigh, then stole a glance in John's direction. She waited for him to crush her close and say: "Penny, you're a charming liar. I don't believe it." Or: "I forgive you and want you more than ever."

But instead she saw a grim, white-faced boy staring into the darkness ahead. Suddenly he jammed his foot on the starter, turned the car savagely around and raced back to the gym. Not a word was spoken.

Penny swung immediately into the gayety on the make-believe ocean liner, resuming her rôle as the most popular girl on the floor.

Soon Jack Bancroft claimed her and whisked her out into the night. they sniffed the same fragrant honeysuckles and glimpsed the same bright moon. Ignoring Jack's maroon roadster, they strolled arm in arm across the campus. Penny leaned against a magnolia tree and looked at Jackson Bancroft speculatively.

"Remember your promise, Penny," he began. "I have a premonition that I'm the lucky fellow."



She peered over Jack's shoulder and smiled into John's eyes, which she knew had been following her every move. Interpreting her smile as a signal, John crossed the floor and took her away from his brother.

"You are," Penny murmured solemnly.

"I knew it!" Jack laughed triumphantly. "When I saw John a few

minutes ago he looked like he'd swallowed a funeral." Jack's arms went about Penny greedily, his mouth sought hers.

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"Wait, Jack," Penny gasped. "Before you kiss me, I—I have a confession to make."

"Now, Penny, don't tease. I've waited a long time for this kiss, and I don't intend to wait any longer."

"But I simply must explain one thing," Penny insisted coolly, slipping free. "I'm not as—as innocent as you think, Jack. You see, I—I wanted to know about life, and everything, so John and I—well, we—"

Penny's voice trailed off significantly, and once again she waited patiently for what she considered the proper reaction.

Jack stared at her with mounting anger. The minutes flew by. Finally he spoke.

"I'll break his beastly neck even if he is my brother!" He flung the words at a very scared Penny, then strode toward the gym.

"Oh, no!" Penny cried, racing along beside him. "It was all my fault. You see, every girl wants to find out—really, Jack, I don't think a girl is sophisticated unless she's had an affair. Do you?"

"Oh, shut up, you little cheat!" Jack sputtered as he left her.

Reviewing her two interviews analytically, Penny asked herself: "Have I lost them both?" For answer she smiled into the night. The Bancroft twins would go into a brotherly huddle, she decided, then race to kiss the hem of her gown. She would forgive them—sometime. Hi, ho! It took brains to get along in this world.

Suddenly her thoughts left the Bancrofts and shot up into the air. She heard the unmistakable hum of

a motor, and quickly spotted a low-winged monoplane swimming by the moon. The plane circled the campus and the pilot turned on his powerful headlight. He dived directly over the gym, then headed toward the airport. The orchestra was going full blast and at the moment all the couples were on the floor. Without a moment's hesitation, Penny jumped into a Bancroft roadster and stepped on the gas. She was the only one to meet the guest from the sky.

"You must be Ina's marvelous cousin from Louisville," she said breathlessly, as she came face to face with the tall, smiling stranger who stepped from the plane in immaculate white flannels and dark-blue coat.

"And you are none other than Penelope Wainwright, Ina's adorable friend I've heard so much about," he said, grinning.

They shook hands and looked each other over appraisingly. Penny glowed inwardly.

"Before this goes any farther," she said impulsively, "let me warn you that I'm a bad woman. I've had two affairs and have just been thrown into the discard."

"Don't lie to me, woman," Tim commanded. "One look into those starry eyes is enough to convince me—"

"Of what?" Penny asked eagerly. "That I'm destined to be the first, last, and only man in your life."

"Come on," Penny cried, eyes shining. "I have a pair of twins I want you to meet. They're dumb on the subject of women, but they're swell pals."





A SERIAL
—Part VI.

Passion of the Snows

By Millicent Moreland

CHAPTER XII.

SMITH, ignoring Korny, went on adjusting the packages on the sled. Eva, the rifle in her hands, stood by with a brave assumption of determination. For a time no one attempted to speak.

"If you want any breakfast, Korny," Smith finally said, "make

yourself useful. Give me a hand with this rope."

Korny was eager enough. He helped Smith to lash the load to the framework of the sled.

"You intend to go, then?" he said.

"Eva and I are going, yes."

Korny fell back a step.

"But you do not mean you will go and leave me alone in this place?"

"That is exactly what I mean." Smith faced him. "The reasons should be clear to you. Chiefly, Eva and I have taken a strong dislike to your company."

"You would wish me to die?" Korny gave a whimper. They couldn't be so cruel and callous.

"I am giving you your one chance to get out alive," Smith went on deliberately. "I have divided what foodstuffs there are into two equal parts. I am leaving you one part, and most of the fresh meat in addition. I am also leaving you a rifle—Paul's. And, further, if Eva and I have any luck, we shall see that a rescue party is sent out for you as soon as conditions permit. All this is more than you deserve."

"I refuse! It is murder!" Korny declared.

"If you attempt to follow us after what I have said, I shall certainly kill you," Smith ended sternly.

Korny stood silent, his mind busy. He slipped the mitt off his right hand, but, at a look from Smith, refrained from seeking the knife under his jacket. He edged nearer the door, however, with the second rifle cunningly in mind.

Smith saw that everything was secure.

"Please! I beg of you! Do not leave me," Korny was whining. He beat his hands on his chest in what seemed a paroxysm of grief and entreaty. "No one will come near me, never. I shoot myself. I go mad. Please, I go on my knees to beg of your mercy."

Smith ignored the man.

"If there's anything in your shack you'd like to take along, better get it now," he said to Eva.

Eva heard without taking her eyes off Korny. She suddenly felt helpless, terribly afraid of some sinister purpose in the man's rolling

eyes and bleating voice. She wanted to cry out a warning, but Smith's almost casual tone reassured her.

"No, there is nothing—nothing much," she answered hastily. After Korny's contamination of her place, she did not want to go near it. But there was her needle, other prized odds and ends, stored away.

"Get what you want, then," said Smith sharply.

She broke from the rigid pose she had taken up by the door, started to hand him the rifle.

"Take it with you, and don't worry," he said, waving her on.

She backed away slowly, compelled by something in his tone and, reaching the other cabin, hurried inside after a moment's wild hesitation.

The instant she was out of sight Korny acted.

He had sidled near the door of his old quarters. Suddenly, he was dashing inside, looking frantically around for the second rifle.

As his eyes fell on the scattered parts, Smith's voice came to him:

"The gun's there O. K. You can start in now reassembling the parts."

But Korny was back at the door again fuming with rage and bafflement. He said nothing. Elation swept him once more, for, three steps away, Smith was apparently oblivious of all danger.

Korny hurled himself on his tormentor. No knife was needed. Once his fingers were at the other's throat, nothing—not even the menace of the armed girl—could save him.

As it happened, Smith was in his element for just a minute. He dodged the first rush and, when Korny descended on him again, arms flailing and red murder in his beads of eyes, he met his man with bare

fists and the cool deliberation of the trained athlete.

Korny went down with a grunt of amazement. He lumbered up, furtively seeking the knife he carried, but, meeting the battering-ram of Smith's right on the point of the chin, went down again to stay.

Eva watched the two men with wide, fascinated eyes.

"Now, do you understand?" Smith bent over the dazed Korny to ask. "I'm taking no risks. You take your chance by staying behind. Follow, and you die!"

Korny scrambled to his feet and stood mumbling to himself.

"Everything O. K.?" Smith asked, turning to Eva.

"I'm ready."

It was an awesome moment as they took a hurried final look around. Eva's heart was pounding. Smith, she could see, was stern, worried, and it was easy to gather that they were bent on a last wild gamble. Yet a thrill passed through her, of gladness, of eager anticipation. She felt no fear.

They were soon leaving the encampment behind, Eva still carrying the rifle, Smith hauling the sled. Korny had been inside the cabin when they left.

"Do you think he will follow us?" Eva questioned.

And Smith answered shortly: "No, I'm sure he won't."

Later, he wondered if, after all, he was wrong.

They reached the vast ice field, the apparently boundless limits of which were lost in the gray mists. As the day lengthened, however, the sun made long avenues in the gray gloom and tempered a cold that pierced to the marrow.

They stopped to look back, both man and girl imagining they saw the outline of the place where at

least they had enjoyed the blessings of food and shelter. Their trail was plainly marked.

And, suddenly, at the end of it, they saw a moving black speck. Korny.

Smith stood still, straining his eyes. They waited. Then the man spoke.

"Do you still see him?"

"I see nothing, nothing at all," Eva answered, a throb in her voice. "He has gone. What will happen to him?"

"I don't know, nor do I care," Smith replied, and bent his frowning gaze on in front, his profile then looking part of the gray, grim world about him.

What was to become of the girl and himself? To this also it was better to pretend not to know, nor to care.

Luck was with them. The weather kept good and, on ahead, they soon observed snowy heights piled up against the brightening sky.

But long hours passed and the light was beginning to fade before the weary trudge over the ice neared an end.

Despite Smith's protests, Eva had insisted in helping haul the sled. Now that the fear of Korny was left behind, an exotic sense of well-being, a cloying contentment, filled the girl.

They spoke little.

"That's our direction," Smith pointed out once. "I'm sorry I can't be certain—we've strayed a bit—but, away to the south there, I imagine is the Great Fish River. We want to head that way later."

Distance here was elusive. Eva, however, guessed that the journey facing them was one of several days' duration.



Their one chance was to locate Eskimos who might be wintering in the neighborhood, Smith impressed on her. His tone was encouraging, but Eva was aware of his anxiety and that he wanted to prepare her for disappointment. He was concerned, too, about her physical condition.

She answered, a bit resentfully, that she was perfectly O. K.; she had not come into these northlands without appreciating the minor dangers and arming

Hardly a word was spoken between them. But Smith was eying her critically, challenging looks that made Eva strain every effort to hide any feelings of weakness.

herself very carefully against them.

But her eyes ached, her limbs were stiff and leaden, long before a halt

was called. Smith was intent on pushing on while there was light, and, as they approached the coastline, he elected to keep moving westward on the ice.

They put up for the night on the edge of the frozen sea. The day had ended brilliantly, with the aurora spanning the dark canopy of the heavens with weird radiance.

Eva was dead tired, but still wondrously content. She watched Smith as he bent over the flame he was coaxing in a small oil cooker. He had seen that she was comfortable in her sleeping bag. And gave her hot soup.

She thanked him simply. The face she had regarded was lined and set, queerly aged. She wanted to speak, but his manner was discouraging.

The next two days and nights passed in much the same way.

The weather continued fine, but the monotony of the long march was beginning to tell. The never-ending slither of moccasined feet on the ice, the labored breathing of Smith and herself as they hauled the sled, Eva felt she would hear in her dreams till the end of her days.

Smith, too, was becoming difficult. They had nearly quarreled.

Eva had discovered that he was saving all the delicacies for her, contenting himself with blubber. When she threatened to take nothing that he was not sharing, he had flared up. He ate blubber because he had accustomed himself to it, he declared, adding that it was their staple diet, and that she herself was eating it via the soup.

"There's enough else to worry about," he had ended. "Do what you're told, please, and don't argue."

Hardly a word was spoken between them. But Smith was eying

her critically at times, challenging looks that made Eva strain every effort to hide any feelings of weakness. She had to give in at last, though.

The sun had been strong that morning and the intense glare from snow and ice had affected her eyes. Smith compelled her to admit to a headache, and she had continued the journey with a bandage over her eyes, angry and humiliated, but unable to defeat his insistence.

"It's slow work," he said later and, keeping close beside him for guidance, Eva detected another warning not to be unduly optimistic. "A case of the blind leading the blind—almost."

But their spirits were soaring on the morning following.

They had not been long under way, skirting the high ice-incrusted cliffs under which they had sheltered, when Smith turned off at a tangent and gave vent to a cry of surprise.

They came upon an upturned Eskimo canoe where it had been crushed in converging ice floes and frozen in. Smith cleared away the ice and found some skins and a bone-tipped native spear.

"Doesn't look as if it's been here for long. Let's hope it's a sign that natives aren't too far off!" he said fervently.

The day had not been far advanced when the thing the man feared was upon them. At first it was no more than a low, whining sound, like an express train in the distance. Smith knew its portent, and hastened inshore.

The day had darkened ominously. Snow was beginning to fall. And, suddenly, the blizzard was screaming in their ears and hurling all before it.

Smith saw the sled roll over and over, but he hung onto the rope and Eva.

By degrees they made the shore and found shelter of a kind behind a jutting rock.

For a long time it was all Eva could do to keep huddled down out of the lashing fury of the tempest and the showers of loose ice it swept before it. It was impossible to see or hear clearly.

"Just you stay put—I'll see to the sled and things," Smith had shouted in her ear.

He seemed to be out of sight for hours, and, terribly scared, Eva was calling his name, ready to plunge out into the vortex of the storm in a panic effort to find him, when she heard his voice again. It was like music to her. Then sanctuary.

Eva found herself thrust into a half-finished snow house. Smith continued to labor on it, inside and out.

"Some of our stuff has vanished," he said once, and, again, when Eva begged him to rest: "We may be here for days, weeks."

Her heart seemed to stop, started galloping afresh. She was afraid to think what it would mean—or was she afraid?

He clambered in beside her at last, drawing a slab of hard snow over the entrance and shutting out the gray light. Eva heard his panting breath as he rested, her own heart too full to find words to say.

Then he was speaking:

"It's devilish hard luck, but it might have struck us at a worse time. We've food for about a week, I reckon. It might not be necessary, but it will be advisable to be as sparing as possible. You understand?"

"You mean that we may have to remain like this for for some time?"

"It's possible. Pretty unpleasant outlook for you." Smith sounded stilted, as if forcing himself to go on. "But—well, you ought to know me fairly well by now. I'll rig up a curtain of sorts with some skins and just forget I'm close by."

"Why—why should I?" Eva felt driven into saying, and was angry at herself the moment after.

He made no answer.

"I'm not afraid, even if I do know nothing of you after all this time," she was rushing on.

Still no answer. She was almost glad, realizing suddenly that there was much that was new and startling in this enforced companionship to which she could need to adjust herself.

Smith busied himself about the igloo, putting a match to a little blubber and in the murky light setting about arranging the stores. Then he rigged up the curtain he had mentioned.

Eva lay in uncomfortable silence most of the time.

"I don't know how you feel. But I admit that I'm about all in," he said at last in the same awkward voice. Then: "By the way, it grows stuffy and humid in the snow. The Eskimo women usually strip. It's a sensible idea."

Eva lay awake in spite of her fatigue long after the light was extinguished. She did not undress that night, which was perhaps the most trying she had put in. It was not fear, as it had been with Maurice Stevenov and the man, Korny, near. Queer emotions engulfed her. She tried to think it was only the strangeness of her surroundings, the silence, the mystery.

At last, after vainly fighting the impulse, she murmured a "good night" to Smith.

Her heart was in her mouth as

she listened. But he was asleep and did not hear. Her thoughts ran on after, a strange medley embracing all that had happened since she left New York.

She thought of her brother, Ken, the genesis of all her hopes, and, now, her despair. It came clearly to her what she had so persistently refused to admit in her first passion to know her brother's fate—that Ken was lost to her forever, that the great white wilderness which was about her now had taken him and would never give him up.

Next day, Eva was obsessed with the idea of confessing her mistake to Smith. She had not forgotten his warnings, that all along he had been right and that her present condition—and his—was due to her folly.

But it was always difficult to speak about such matters, especially to such a man.

Four days had passed—days made doubly awkward and insufferable by the strained relationship of these two—before Eva touched on vital matters.

She was plunged in apathy at the time. Like all others in a similar plight, their main topic of conversation was food and the dishes each would choose if, miraculously, the opportunity offered.

Smith was frankly bored, growing more and more restless under the galling inaction.

"There's not much use pretending," Eva said suddenly. "Do you honestly think there is any hope for us?"

"I shouldn't say no," he answered. "It all depends on getting food to keep us going."

"Even then," she rejoined, and added in a tone that was both emotional and defiant, "to be honest, I don't care much. You know why I came up here?"

Smith was moody. He did not like these conversations.

"Well, naturally," he said.

"I hoped to find my brother," Eva went on, fighting back the tears. "I know now that it was all a mistake. My brother will never come back. I feel it. He is somewhere up here, near to us perhaps. I feel that, too. And that is why I don't seem to care."

"Come now, that's not your usual spirit," Smith attempted to rally her, though uneasily. "I'm sure, if it's true about your brother—well, I'll bet he stuck it out to the end."

Eva looked at him curiously. At the moment, she was carried away by first thoughts, something that must not be left unsaid.

"Please don't think me utterly selfish," she was entreating. "I am thinking of others, of you. I am to blame for everything!"

"Nonsense."

"It's true—terribly true. And you must hate me. You do hate me."

"How could I?" Smith looked up in real distress, then continued: "I sometimes fear you."

"But why?"

"It's difficult to say. I am unused to women."

Eva's voice held a choke; unashamedly the tears filled her eyes. He was merely evasive.

"I can never, never understand you," she cried, then went groping after that other thought he had put into her head—something in praise of Ken. "Why did you come with us at all?" she demanded. "What did you hope to gain?"

"I did not like to see you being fooled."

"Why didn't you come to me in New York with your warning?"

"I had every intention of seeing you, especially when I knew that

Stevenov was posing as your friend. That night at Hale's apartment— But I was a fool!"

Smith was in a rage. In a sentence he recounted how he had been drugged and detained until, reading at the last moment of the *Viking's* projected trip, all he could do was to reach St. Johns and smuggle himself on board before the vessel sailed.

"If it was as serious as you supposed, you could have gone to the police."

"I had other things to think about."

"Of course, there was more between you and Maurice Stevenov than any of us guessed."

"I had a bone to pick with him."

"You knew everything—about the treasure—about my brother." Eva caught her breath, for this was the thing she had wanted to ask. "Perhaps, too, you knew my brother, Ken Sinclair?"

Smith's head was sunk on his chest; he was fidgety and nervous.

"I knew about him, yes," he said at last, as one driving himself to it. "I knew the whole story."

Eva's shining eyes were begging him, compelling him to go on.

"You mean—you know what happened to Ken and never told me?"

"I hated to tell you. How sorry I am now I can only leave you to guess. I knew the treasure was not in the ghost ship, as Maurice Stevenov, too, knew it wasn't. I warned you, remember."

"But—"

"Stevenov and the woman, Sonia, were acting for people who knew about the jewels and had been trying for years to recover them. They played up to you in the hope that you had heard from your brother where he had actually hidden the stuff."

"Ken found it, you mean?"

"He—and McKerrow—found it, yes. Just after you last had word from him, I imagine. His diary was missing. You received that, at least?"

"How did you know?"

"Stevenov knew, but he did not know all." Smith paused, like a sick man. "But you want me to go on?"

"Tell me about my brother."

"He was shot."

"By whom?"

"The same gang in whose hands you found yourself, the ones who killed your friend Hale and— But let me explain."

Smith was finding it easier. He felt that at last he was doing the right thing, that the girl was prepared to listen, and there was much he wanted to make clear, bad impressions to correct.

Ken Sinclair and McKerrow, he said, had located the ghost ship in face of the gang which had been coming every season to the neighborhood prosecuting a search toward the same end. They had tracked the young American across two continents, latterly in company with his friend, McKerrow, fearing that he knew a little more than they themselves.

Eva's brother had nearly got away with it. He and McKerrow had actually found the treasure. Two nights later, suspicious of the plane they had seen near, they had cached the gems before making their first camp.

They had been surprised in the early morning, and had put up a fight. Sinclair had been killed outright. McKerrow, wounded, had been taken prisoner.

"Possibly he is aboard the same ship with Stevenov and the rest now, if they have escaped the ice," Smith finished. "Anyway, he escaped."

Eva's thoughts were flying elsewhere. Grief, amazement, shame overwhelmed her.

"But the ring Sonia was wearing—and her story?"

"As to that, the woman was once well known on the Moscow stage. A consummate spy. Her story to you was an ingenious lie. As to the ring—in the search for the diary, it was seen and taken by some one, and Stevenov evidently saw a use for it later."

Eva's head was buried in her arms.

"What a fool I have been!" she sobbed.

It was not until they had been up some time the following morning that she voiced the startling suspicion that had come to her.

"You have not told me yet who you are."

"I am of no consequence," Smith replied.

"Oh, please, don't make it harder for me," Eva was crying. "Tell me—are you Hugh McKerrow, my brother's friend?"

Smith simply hung his head.

CHAPTER XIII.

The revelation left Eva dumb. It changed everything, and she was obliged suddenly to readjust herself from a hundred different angles. She cried without knowing why. McKerrow spoke to her, but she had nothing to say.

Later in the day, she faced him and asked why he had deceived her so long.

"About Ken, you mean? It seemed—well, that it was best to let the affair wear itself out. We took risks, a fighting chance. I hated to tell you. I couldn't do it. Besides, there was the treasure."

"I did not care about that."

More was on the tip of Eva's tongue, but she stopped as hitherto unsuspected thoughts surged to her mind. McKerrow himself rather inspired them.

The treasure had been found, and, if all accounts were true, it represented a great fortune. What had become of it? Only this man knew.

Eva felt a cold tremor run through her, and she turned to the man, beseeching him to lift the cloud that was suddenly fogging everything. Again words were stilled on her lips. He hung his head; he saw clearly what was in her mind, but he made no effort to repudiate the stigma of guilt.

Eva had not the heart to go on. The treasure still did not matter; it mattered less and less in their present circumstances. She battled with deeper emotions. This man had been perhaps her brother's greatest friend. He had been with him at the last, and knew more about him than any one else. Yet he did nothing to justify himself. As Smith, his inscrutability had baffled her. As McKerrow, he was no better.

Thereafter, the subject was closed. But at a cost which neither man nor girl failed to discern. A blanket of reserve came over them, a mutual distrust which the man at any rate magnified. Eva, her thoughts concentrating always on this one theme, spoke of Ken, and McKerrow cleared up many points, but without enthusiasm.

Now that his secret was out, he gave the impression of one who realizes his many deficiencies, his tactlessness. He remained preoccupied, busying himself in little futile ways, and was anxious only to avoid the girl's look.

Night came. There seemed to be no diminution of the storm, which,



Illustration by [Signature]

Smith's note told her to remain where she was until he returned. Not one word of regret, or even good-by. Eva's blood ran cold as she visualized the fate in store for her should he fail to return.

as the man knew, might continue for days, even weeks.

Eva awoke in the morning with the premonition that a change had

taken place. She had been greatly troubled during the night, observing that McKerrow had something on his mind and rebelling under the

strain be imposed on both of them.

Suddenly, she knew. She found herself alone in the igloo. McKerrow was gone!

That he was not merely out looking around, as he had been on other occasions, was at once evidenced by the note he had left pinned to the curtain.

Scrawled in pencil, Eva read:

Please do not be alarmed. As there is no sign of the weather clearing, the need for food to carry us on makes it imperative that something be done without further delay. There is blubber enough for at least a week. Be as sparing as possible, and do not allow yourself to become unduly despondent. I am obliged to leave you alone for a time to see if help is available anywhere near; at least to try to add to our food supply. Remain where you are, even if the weather clears. It is our only chance.

H. McK.

Just that. Not one word of regret, or even good-by.

Eva was presently recalling all that the man had already endured, and she could not close her eyes to the gravity of the position which the message disclosed. Her blood ran cold as she visualized the fate in store for her should McKerrow fail to return. But it was a sense of loss, accompanied by an unreasoning remorse, that struck her hardest.

Her first reckless impulse was to make her way into the open, to follow McKerrow. There was suddenly so much she wanted to say to him.

In time, she calmed down. "Remain where you are. Our only chance," he had said. And he had always been right. It was what he wished, and for once she had not the heart to disobey him.

Eva sank down, appalled by the loneliness about her; but it was because of that unreasoning, stupidifying remorse that she wept.

McKerrow, meantime, was battling his way through the hurricane of wind and snow.

He had already sized up his chances and determined on his plan. And no thought of the peril in which he had left the girl made him deviate from his course. It was their only chance, her only chance.

Bit by bit, he fought his way to the high ground above. It was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. He did not mind this so long as he kept his sense of direction. Food did not concern him. He had brought his rifle, but the possibility of using it should he come across any game was in the nature of a last resort.

Time was the vital factor and, during the night, he had planned with mathematical precision how to make the most of every minute. He gave himself three days. In his pack was his sleeping bag, spare blankets, and just enough blubber to insure that he would be physically capable of going forward for the time he calculated.

He kept a westerly direction, pessimistic about finding Eskimos anywhere near, but gambling on an isolated band having settled in the vicinity of the Fish River during the freeze-up.

Night found him plodding on in the teeth of the gale. He stopped before fatigue overcame him, throwing up adequate shelter in the snow and, wrapped in his blankets, fighting sleep till he felt the warm blood in his veins.

With the first glimmer of the new day he was studying his position and, after chewing a morsel of blubber, bending his back afresh to the howling tempest.

Then another night.

McKerrow cursed the weariness that was sapping his strength. He

had been careful. He had nursed himself. He was still constitutionally sound.

He was admitting at last that he had lost his old coolness. His trouble was of the mind; his morale was shaken.

No good with every step trying to shut out the haunting thought of the girl he had left in the igloo alone. He thought he knew her well enough to feel sure that she would stick it out; the igloo, after all, was her only refuge, and she was no coward. Now, he was fighting doubts, maddening doubts. He had seen men go out of their minds in less trying circumstances than he had imposed on her. And he certainly had left her with a fine lot to think about.

After his escape from the Stevenov gang in Europe, he had returned west with Ken Sinclair's sister avidly in mind. He had meant to see her, to tell her the truth. Opportunity had not been lacking, even when the presence of Maurice Stevenov and the woman, Sonia, had urged no further loss of time.

And, like the consummate diplomat he was, he had waited till he had damned himself thoroughly in the girl's eyes, choosing the time of utter hopelessness, when her own life looked like being surrendered in her blind, unnecessary quest.

McKerrow set his teeth and lashed himself on.

The third day the blizzard seemed to have blown itself out. He could see across to the mountains lying southwest. His direction was still good. But he saw nothing—nothing but that stark vista of ice and snow.

The necessity to stop and hunt was urged upon him. Not for his own sake. For hers.

Next morning he crawled from his sleeping bag with the dazed feeling

that he had reached the end. His feet were bad. He felt dizzy, ill.

Enraged at the thought, he packed methodically, adjusted his pack, staggered on his way. He had brought ample ammunition, and, forced to rest every few hundred yards, he raised his rifle and fired. Then on again.

He cursed his unsteadiness, the befogging conflict going on in his mind. He ought to stop, more food was the vital thing. He ought to be getting back.

Then that electrifying thrill of more than hope, the chilled blood singing in his veins, the burst of sheer elation that made everything seem suddenly possible.

He had settled against some rocks overlooking an ice-bound gully. Beyond, stretched low-lying country and the broad expanse of ice which was the river he sought. He fumbled with his gun, fired once, twice.

Then, distinctly, he heard the bark of a dog. He fired again. There was no response for a time, and he was convinced that his imagination was playing tricks, when the penetrating howl of some canine species set his nerves on edge with giddy doubt. No wolf that, unless it was some devilish prank of nature.

With strength born of desperate hope, McKerrow propelled himself forward. He scrambled into the ravine before him, followed its twisting course till the more accessible opposite bank gave him a chance of cutting directly toward the wide channel beyond.

Night descended, and he was still on his feet, stumbling and pitching headlong at times in the snow, but goaded by sheer will power to rise and go on, always with the mad-

dening vision of the girl back there, waiting, trusting in him.

He stopped suddenly, swaying like a drunken man. He heard a deep-throated growl, and he was not sure, but a dark shape seemed to leap up at him out of the darkness.

He cried out, thinking vaguely of his rifle, unaware that the weapon had spun from his nerveless grasp. His voice was no more than a croak, and in the same instant he collapsed.

The Eskimos found him in the morning. A great Siberian Husky had howled in the night, and was found by his side. He looked dead, frozen.

But McKerrow's luck held good. The natives made a fire; they stripped and wrapped him in warm blankets.

He raved a little under the drastic treatment imposed on him, but, later in the day, he was able to understand that he had walked into an encampment of some three or four families bound for a rendezvous farther west. The great frost had come early; the blizzard had held them up.

McKerrow cursed his disabilities. He viewed the waning daylight, and, pointing the way he had come, hammered out his story. He urged that he must return at once.

The natives were simple and unsophisticated, but they took command. It would be an easy journey for their dogs, and they would set out at daybreak, when the trail could be followed. That night it was folly.

Smith left himself in their hands, and he saw them go off at last without him. He had won through miraculously which was good enough. His weakness scared him. The natives would accomplish the job better without him, and he was praying that, in the intervening

hours, if all was well with the girl, he would be in a more presentable condition to face her.

The team of Huskies sped over the frozen ground. Some time before noon, the Eskimo drivers saw a dark speck on the line of the trail. A cry came to their ears, and, shortly, they were discerning the figure of the woman they had come seeking.

Eva was fit and well. She had been trudging over the snow for the last hour, not altogether on blind impulse, but knowing that at any time she might retrace her steps back to the igloo she had left.

The strain of the past days had tried her courage to the utmost. The advent of better weather, enabling her to come into the open, had eased the strain.

And, through it all, she clung to her faith in the man she persistently thought of as Smith. She feared to disobey him.

That morning, she had looked upon the path he had taken, faint yet unmistakable. She had been fascinated. She had followed the trail a little way, and the lurking fear it had been her greatest ordeal to fight and repress had goaded her on.

Seeing the advancing figures, the speeding dogs, a delirious joy swept her. She hastened forward.

Missing the face, the voice, she expected, she looked from one to the other of the natives, the exhilaration that was making her light-headed suddenly gone. She was only half relieved when the men, smiling broadly, tried to reassure her with energetic signs.

She went off with them, crouched in the sled they had prepared for her use.

Arrived at the igloos, bewildered by the Eskimo families who surrounded her, her heart turned cold.

She saw nothing or nobody when she did not see Smith.

He was asleep, one of the natives tried to convey. Asleep? She could not understand. A greater fear smote her. But they were leading her to the igloo where he lay.

She saw his form in the dim light. He was very still, and a gulping sob of fright was wrung from her. She paused only an instant before throwing herself on her knees beside him.

Then she saw that he was, indeed, only asleep; thin, emaciated, breathing heavily, but alive.

Eva had no count of time or place or circumstance for some moments after. Her arms were around Smith's shoulders, her cheek was laid against his hot brow. She cried in a passion of relief unspeakable, unashamed, uncaring.

The man stirred and, fully awake, lay still for a moment, uncomprehending at first, then stiff with dismay.

Gently, he shook her off. He rose on an elbow, desperately pretending at first that he did not see her. Then:

"Guess I'm getting flabby in my old age," he said. "But I knew you'd stick it out. Sorry I was so long."

Several days passed uneventfully.

The reaction after the strain of the past few weeks left Eva greatly fatigued. She slept a good deal. The world of big cities, to which she would shortly be returning, did not concern her unduly, nor did the thought that she had almost certainly been given up for lost.

No one needed her particularly. She foresaw the fuss that would be made. But it would soon wear off. And, here in the great white wilder-

ness, she had discovered a wondrous content. She did not show it. She was afraid to betray it. She guarded it jealously, knowing that it could not last.

McKerrow was not so ill as weak. But he was soon up and about, just as Eva had always seen him—moody and reserved and preoccupied with his own thoughts. Their miraculous salvation did not seem to impress him; he treated it as a matter of course.

Eva, mindful of her weakness when she had found him, strenuously intent on banishing the memory, was more than a little puzzled by his manner. For the first time in their later wandering a sense of separation was uppermost.

She was in McKerrow's hands. He talked much with the natives, who realized the important part they were playing in yet another epic of the ice fields and were ready to shape their next movements as this man willed.

The nearest contact with the civilized world was a missionary post some three hundred miles distant. The next step was for the man and girl to set out on the journey. But for the threat of more snow, the weather was suitable.

McKerrow made no effort to go. He was vague. He appeared to assume that Eva's state of health—and his own—did not fit them for the move.

But, unlike Eva, he was not altogether blessing their changed circumstances. He saw that the girl's present mood was born of the reaction, that, shortly, she would be taking a more level-headed view. And there was much that she was forgetting or willfully trying to banish from her mind.

His vague reference to the treasure, for instance.



A sob of fright was wrung from Eva as she threw herself on her knees beside Smith. Then she saw that he was not dead. Her arms were around him and she cried in a passion of relief.

McKerrow was vastly troubled. He had blundered badly in the past. With the end of the adventure in sight, he wanted to avoid further tactlessness. And, yet, there was something that should not be left undone; some purpose which had

been at the back of his mind when he first boarded the *Viking* and urged that the trip into the north might not, after all, be fruitless.

He was forced to make a decision one morning. He met Eva face to face as she came from the igloo she

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occupied with a young native girl.

McKerrow was conscious chiefly of the challenge flashing in blue eyes as she wished him "good morning."

"Have you made up your mind yet—what we are to do, I mean?" she said when he gave no sign of having anything to say.

"If you feel like it, why, I guess we can push off any time now," he answered after a moment. "It will be more comfortable at the settlement. There's the radio there. We can get some news sent through."

"Whatever you say," Eva murmured, dubiously.

He looked fidgety and hesitant.

"Wait," he went on as she turned away. "There's just one thing." It was coming at last! "It's about what we were speaking of that day in our old place. A spot I'd like to show you while we have the chance. I've worked it out, and reckon we can be there and back inside of three or four days. I can get a team of Huskies for the job. Only, it means just you and I."

Eva's thoughts flew in confusion to one thing.

"You mean Ken——" She could not finish.

"That neighborhood," Smith said, and lowered his head to shut out the sight of her pain.

"Please," Eva entreated. "It would make everything seem worth while to me."

Later in the morning, the best team in the village was harnessed and straining on the leash. That McKerrow was not mushing for the first time, and that the natives had fullest confidence in him, was soon evident.

Methodically, he saw that everything was as it should be, Eva warmly packed in, then, with a crack of his whip, they were off.

They took the river ice smoothly

and, McKerrow giving the dogs their head, made speedy progress upstream.

McKerrow spoke only to the dogs. Eva found no fault. Her heart was too full for a variety of reasons; one, the incredible feeling that this was their last journey together, one of the last nights they would spend out in the wilderness.

She helped McKerrow to spread the sleeping bags when they halted for the night.

They were on their way again in the pale light of early morning. Snow fell, and McKerrow kept to the river as far as possible. He had no attention for the girl at all.

But, late in the afternoon, a change came over him. They approached high rocks into which the river bed narrowed. Another portage, but one, this time, with which McKerrow seemed to be familiar.

"We're close," he said abruptly, and, Eva leaving the sled, he guided the dogs up steep banks to the high, broken ground above.

Eva kept beside him, impressed, a little afraid. He was so very intent. The dogs were getting out of hand. He urged them on sharply, but only to ease up a minute after.

The silence, the suspense, was breaking the girl. They wandered on for nearly an hour, keeping near to the edge of the gully at the bottom of which, under the ice, the muffled roar of the water could be heard.

Presently, McKerrow stopped and pointed, and Eva could follow the snaking line of the stream to a point where it was lost in the dim expanse of a great lake.

"It was just here," the man said simply, and he gestured around.

Eva could not speak for a time. Ken filled her thoughts. McKerrow, having seen the dogs temporarily

settled, was wandering to and fro looking eagerly among the rocks.

"We camped for the night just under that ledge," he stopped to point out. "I was on my way down to the stream as dawn was coming up when I heard the commotion. It was too late then."

Eva caught and held his gaze. Her tear-filled eyes implored him.

"You know where——" she tried to say.

"Somewhere near," was all McKerrow would answer. His voice softened, however, and he doffed his cap, held his head high for a moment. A smile touched his lips; the light in his eyes transfigured the man.

Eva understood, forgot her grief, the awesomeness and the silence in that hallowed place. McKerrow was proud to remember his lost pal, and his spirit was about them. He made a *beau geste*, man to man.

And the tears that glistened on the girl's lids became tears of pride in turn. She was proud to remember that lost brother, proud also of the man here before her who had adventured with him and who had proved up to the hilt that the best in their comradeship still lived.

But McKerrow was on the move again.

"Wait," he said, shortly.

He clambered a little way down the ridge where the broken surface of the rock showed mossy patches in the snow. He searched patiently for a time, then, digging with the ax he had brought among some willow stumps, he found what he sought.

Her emotions suddenly shifting, filled with dismay, Eva watched him unearth a metal box corroded with rust and grime. McKerrow gave her a look then, but said nothing, re-

turning to the box in an effort to open it.

He succeeded at last, disclosing a weighty, dark leather bag, loosely wrapped in a piece of crimson velvet, to the firmly drawn binding of which some kind of metal seal was attached.

McKerrow cut through this summarily, and, onto the square of velvet, emptied out the long-hidden treasure of the ghost ship.

Eva did not stir. Some insistent inner fear kept her rigid and still. All that had passed between this man and herself relating to the treasure rushed to mind, all that she had striven to forget.

She recognized now that she had waited for such a moment as this, and, in spite of her faith in the man, she had foreseen in it something in the nature of a test.

He was regarding her now questioningly, with nothing approaching elation in his look, just calm and very purposeful.

He ran his fingers through the glittering pile before him—gems beyond price, diamonds and rubies, pearls and others, such as king or emperor must have envied, had probably at one time possessed. The bulk of the stones were loose; some were in their original settings—pendants, crosses, antique jeweled ornaments and vanity boxes.

"Well, here's the cause of it all," McKerrow said. "The price has been high, but it's been a great adventure." He paused a moment. "They're ours, I suppose."

"Ours," he said. Eva's breath caught in her throat. A kind of nausea seized her.

"I don't want them," she cried. "They're yours!"

McKerrow was gazing at a handful he had picked up, mostly rubies. In that world of glaring white the

stones were startlingly vivid; from every facet they shone and corrugated with an almost liquid glow.

The man glanced up again into the white, strained face watching his every movement. He still did not speak, but his thought carried unerringly. How red, like blood, the purchase price.

Then:

"You don't want these?" he challenged afresh.

"I hate and loathe them," was wrung from the girl.

"Thank you for that!"

McKerrow was hesitant no longer. He picked up the costly pile—how costly no one could pretend to say—and climbed to the topmost ridge with his load.

There he paused for an instant to look about him. Only the girl and himself. This last rite was for no other eyes, no other memory to carry away.

With bated breath Eva watched him pick up the gems and scatter them in the gully seventy or eighty feet below.

At first, she was impelled to cry out in protest. But there was no unwillingness in McKerrow's action; he found real pleasure in it. And, sure that there were to be no regrets, Eva was silent, torn between relief and a passionate pride in the man who could thus assure her that there are things in life priced above rubies.

"I feel better now," said McKerrow when all traces of the box and its contents were removed. "Time we were getting back!"

As on the way up, McKerrow spoke only when necessity obliged him to. But, behind the stern features he turned to the task in hand, were many perplexing thoughts.

Eva, more sensitive to his moods than she had been hitherto, was, in her turn, forcing a feeling of resignation. At times, furtively watching the man's profile, the whirl of her own thoughts scared her.

If it was to be the end between them, she could not see it. She could not bear to think it was the end. And then some queer, suffocating emotion would seize her and, with a mounting sense of shame, she cried wildly to banish the whole harassing problem.

They reached their camp of the previous night after a strenuous day. In the morning, McKerrow was up at his customary early hour, apparently eager only to see the end of the journey.

Eva rebelled at last. After their long time together, the mutual understanding they had achieved, this taciturn mood was stupid and galling. They had been under way some time and were traveling on easy ice, when she forced conversation.

"I haven't told you that Ken often mentioned you in his letters," she began. She knew a lot about him really. Ken had met him first on his way to Europe. McKerrow, a brilliant science man, had then been on his way to take up a research scholarship in Germany. He was very comfortably off, Ken had said, and his home—when he remembered he had one—was in Vancouver. McKerrow had returned to Canada, and it was there Ken had met him for their tragic journey into the North.

"He spoke about you plenty," McKerrow responded. "Maybe I didn't appreciate the position—you being left alone, I mean. Ken wanted to do a lot for you."

Eva went on after a moment:

"He did a great deal. But you



— I am thankful I met you—for all you have done.”

“Look here, you saved me from Korny’s gun, and you’ve no idea how it annoys me to be reminded of the fact.”

“No,” said Eva, “I am thinking of the way I treated you from the beginning. I was afraid of you, somehow.”

“That doesn’t surprise me!” A smile flickered his lips. “If you’re quite assured of my harmlessness, I’ve something to be thankful for.”

Before Eva could go on he stopped the team and went to examine the leader’s paws for frozen snow. He shook his head after, with a look ahead.

Eva was concerned only for the

"I will? I don't know. It's different now. It's most like yourself, I suppose—nobody very close to go back to. Must see my lawyer, though. There's quite a lot of money coming to me, I believe. Then I'll be moving on somewhere else—Alaska, I expect."

Eva became silent. But with the passage of every minute a tempestuous urge grew within her not to be baffled finally and forever. Her motive was obscure and affrightening; she was careless about ways and means.

They arrived at length at a portage that took them over high ground. Already the swift Arctic night was approaching. McKerrow called a halt, suggesting a meal.

Eva, gazing across the immense snow blanket to the orange disk of the sun, was conscious of the man's awkwardness.

"I can't eat," she said on an angry impulse.

"But why?" He looked up at her.

"I don't know. I just feel terribly unhappy."

McKerrow frowned and came a step nearer to stand before her, his muscles tensing, his look stern as he met glistening violet eyes in which shame and defiance battled.

"I understand," he said in a low voice. "But it will be all right very soon. If we want to make the village——"

"But you don't understand!" Eva was throwing at him, hating her weakness, but swept on irresistibly by the desperate nature of the case. "You have not asked what's to become of me. You don't care."

McKerrow steadied himself with visible effort. He fought vainly for words, feeling that the situation was at last thoroughly out of hand. The girl was unashamedly crying.

"I know it. You still hate me," she was going on, "and it is terrible for me to—to know it is all over and that you do not understand at all how I feel about you—now."

McKerrow gestured simple helplessness.

"But I think I do," he prepared to argue. "It's always the same up here, especially after the exciting time we've gone through. One gets abnormal, sees things, believes things, not just as they are. You've come through a good deal—wonderfully. It's given you a—a kind of queer slant. Myself, too. It'll be different when you get back."

"I've no desire to go back. If I do I shall certainly never be happy again." Eva paused. She was trying to express the truth, and the effort bewildered her with a sudden devastating sense of insecurity, of utter loss. "I—I can't tell you why," she ended, and hung her head, too afraid to look up, blind to everything but the suffocating beat of her heart, the smallness of herself, the enveloping presence of the man before her, silent, yet dominating this wide wilderness as Fate itself.

A quick indrawn breath, and McKerrow's voice seemed to boom at her:

"You've got me in a fine stew! I wish to Heaven——" He broke off, but not adroitly enough to hide the fit of temper which expressed merely his helplessness. "See," he went on, turning aside, "this isn't going to be our last night, after all. We can't make the village—the dogs are dead tired, anyhow. Let's see——"

It was an obvious relief to him to get busy, selecting a suitable camping ground, seeing to the dogs and unpacking the blankets. He did not once look at Eva.

Setting about preparing the eve-

ning meal, he looked up at her. She was standing a little way off, a picture of misery.

Almost savagely, he stalked up to her.

"Seems I've done the wrong thing again," he said, with the determination of one driven to speak his mind, whatever the consequences. "You are properly fed up with me, aren't you?"

No answer. Not even a look.

"You talk about hate," McKerrow lashed himself to go on. "You see how we are—here, our two selves on the rim of the world—and you tell me I hate you. Don't you know that it's been a refinement of torture all these days and weeks to have you so near. I'm human. I've never had much interest in women. But you're different, and you're Ken's own sister."

Eva had lifted a white face from which her hood had fallen back. She looked like a stricken child. She even put up mitted hands in a nervous gesture of defense.

McKerrow seized her hard-clenched, small fists, held her with cruel firmness.

"Do you know that you're the most precious thing in life?" he was continuing. "I want to have all this over with, I want to get away, just to try to forget. Now, do you understand? Look at me. Pity me."

Eva swayed before him, her eyes fixed steadily on his face and saying in that mystic time what no words could express.

He wavered for a moment, still retaining his hold on her.

"You don't seriously mean——" His voice was hushed. He could not see her face for her head was against his chest.

He held her fiercely close, saying nothing. Then, still without a word, he stalked away to where he had fixed up the sleeping bags. He blundered about for a minute, then turned to the meal he had begun to prepare.

Suddenly, he was standing before her again.

"What am I to do about you?" he said. "I will do whatever you wish, because I worship you, always shall do. But it would be madness to suggest anything like marriage."

"But why?"

"You've seen something of me, haven't you? I'm rough, crude. I feel as old as——"

"We've been together so long that I feel I have been married to you for quite a long time," she murmured, ignoring his words.

He picked her up bodily then, kissed her with brutal fervor. Then, looking into the flushed face, he said huskily:

"We are still as we were—just you and I. Do you solemnly mean it—that you want me, like that?"

"I love you," she replied. "I've loved you for a long time, only I did not realize it until you were sick and I thought I had lost you."

"My darling," he murmured, his voice husky with emotion. Then his lips found hers and silence wrapped them around, broken only by the sounds of the dogs.

THE END.





She Answered "Yes"

By Margaret Dollison

DEE was small and slender, with gay-painted lips, long lashes, and hair that was as smooth and blue-black as dancing shadows on a wall. But Dee's best trick was wearing clothes—evening things high under the chin, and no back at all; gold sandals that could add several inches to her height and yet keep the warm slash of her mouth temptingly distant from her dancing partner; evening wraps of apricot-colored material or deep-blue, in

which men liked to wrap her cozily, with the hope of holding her in their arms.

And Dee knew all the answers, or thought she did, until one night Terry Jarvis, a man she had known all her bright young life, said to her:

"You kids think you are having a big time, don't you? You think that having every man in the room make love to you makes it a big evening. Get wise to yourself."

And because Terry's big arms, tailored and trim in a white evening jacket, had just released her yielding young body, and because Terry's burning kiss had just kindled a new excitement against her crimson lips, she suddenly drew away, furious, and her fingers left a quick red mark against his face.

It wasn't until hours later, when she sat bolt upright in her bed, wide awake, that she thought of the right answer for Terry Jarvis. She could see herself, clad in white silk pajamas, her short dark hair tumbled about her shoulders, in the mirror at the foot of the bed—could see herself sitting cross-legged and indignant, counting off on her fingers all the good answers for that crack of Terry's.

"Maybe we *are* having a big time, Mr. Terry Jarvis. But maybe we are wiser than you think we are. It just might be that it's the men who are being a little dumb. You pay the checks and the taxi fares, and you buy us gardenias and jade earrings and other extravagant items, don't you? And you go about and bestow your ardent kisses and expect them to clamp first mortgages on us, and they don't, and that's what you are howling about, isn't it?"

Oh, she would tell him, the very first time he called. And the next time they danced she would let him kiss her, with all the warmth and excitement that Terry Jarvis could pack into a kiss. Then, with her chin high, she would go sailing off in the arms of another man, and she would let the Jarvis person understand that he held exactly no mortgage at all as far as she was concerned.

But Terry didn't phone. Dee went with other men to two or three

places where Terry was often seen, but he wasn't there. So she refused several dates, and took to doing her hair that new way with the short curly ends brushed upward and fastened high against the back of her head, with the chance of Terry's dashing into her apartment for a chat, as he used to do sometimes. But he didn't come.

With every lost evening that went by, Dee got more provoked and more determined to tell him. The barbs that had been in Terry's words that night rankled in her mind all day, and kept her awake at night.

Then one day at lunch, Eve Lang, who worked with the City View Realty, said casually: "Have you heard about the crazy thing Terry Jarvis is doing?"

Dee sat up a little. "Oh, Terry's always doing something rattle-brained." There was the time he had gone to Connecticut to raise goats, and the time he had sailed with an expedition to dig buried treasure in Mexico and was gone six months. But now he was working in his uncle's law office, and that should keep him settled.

Eve was picking at her salad. "You remember that little house with a picket fence and an apple tree, out in the country, that an old aunt or some one left to Terry? It's been on our lists for years. For sale or rent, but no one's ever taken it. Well, Terry is staying out there. Batching, if you please, among the cows and caterpillars. Can you figure that one out?"

Dee couldn't. But she did have a sudden idea. As soon as she could, she got away from Eve and tore up to the City View Realty before she was due back at the office.

To the young man at the desk she



said: "I'm looking for a house in the country. Something with a—a picket fence and a couple of trees."

Even while the young man was going through a file of cards, Dee was saying in her mind: "Maybe we aren't as dumb as you think we are, Terry Jarvis," and she was leafing through her mental notebook for other points. "It's the men who pay and pay and pay, I've noticed." Oh, at last she was going to have a chance to tell him!

The young man took a card from the file. "Exactly the thing you want," he said. "Five rooms and a fireplace. Lilac bush beside the front gate, and a robin's nest in the apple tree. We shall be very glad to let you see the place."

On a corner of the card Dee saw the item, "Terrance Jarvis, owner." "I'm sure this is the place I want," she told him, and when she left the City View offices, she had a lease for the house in her purse and a key for the kitchen door. The rent for a month was the price of a new evening wrap, but it was going to be worth it—this chance to tell Terry a few things and then to invite him politely but definitely to get out of her house. Mr. Terry Jarvis would see her having fun in the kitchen of the old house, and he would see that she could put in an evening without having men make love to her—especially one certain man.

Terry was big—broad of shoulder and six feet something. When he appeared in the kitchen door of the tiny house that evening, the room seemed suddenly crowded.

Dee, with a long cooking fork, was casually testing the steak, when he flung open the door and stood there, amazed for a second at the domesticity of the scene. Dee, wearing a pink gingham apron, was

flushed from the heat of the stove, and the small room was filled with the appetizing sputter of the steak. There were mushrooms in a pan on the stove, a salad, and crisp rolls and butter on the table. A place was set with plate, cup and saucer, and silver for one person. That was evident, but the steak in the skillet was enormous.

Then Terry came across to the stove, running a wide hand back along his head, as if he rather liked the situation.

"What is this?" he wanted to know. "A plot? Heroine gets villain in lone country house and feeds him steak garnished with arsenic. Smells good, though."

Dee's chin came up. "Aren't you taking a lot for granted, Mr. Terry Jarvis? The heroine hasn't even given the villain a second thought. Though"—she managed this as a casual afterthought—"if you had let me know you were going to look me up, I'd have had enough steak for two."

Terry glanced at the size of the steak in the skillet, looked down at Dee, and grinned. Then: "If you had told me you were coming out to my house to break and enter, I could have told you that I'd be here for dinner."

"Your house?" Dee got that off with fiery innocence. "This happens to be my house."

"Yours?"

"Mine."

One of Terry's wide, handsome brows climbed up and up. He dropped his hat, the keys to his car, and an evening paper on the table. "Can you prove that?"

Dee flew to her pocketbook. She got out the lease.

He touched the official paper gingerly. "I see."

"I don't." She looked sternly at



Suddenly Dee stood frozen at her task. Was this a plot? Could this be one of those desert-island ideas of the movies, in which the hero and the heroine get stranded on a tropical isle for the night? Could Terry be harboring similar motives?

Terry's coat, which he had draped across the back of a kitchen chair quite as if he lived here. "What are we going to do about it?" Of course, Dee really knew what she was going to do about it, once she had had her say.

But the virile, assured Mr. Jarvis rather complicated the issue.

"Let's," he said, "eat the steak, and then decide what's to be done. It wouldn't be sensible to let a steak like that get cold while we quibble about the proprieties."

Dee was starved. Maybe it was the country air, or perhaps it was because she hadn't had much more than a salted cracker for lunch. And the food was good. There had been a recipe on the can for preparing the mushrooms, and directions on the can of coffee for making perfect coffee. The fruits she had brought for dessert were sweet and ripe, and there was sharp yellow cheese in a foil-wrapped package.

Terry had four cups of coffee and two helpings of steak and mushrooms, talking all the while about the advantages of living in the country, and how you could do over an old house like this and make it colonial or old English or modern. Dee simply didn't have a chance to get to the thing she had to say. For, after all, you had to lead firmly up to a thing like that or you missed the point entirely.

Then she was washing dishes.

"For a girl," said Terry, towering above her for a moment, "who can wear a jeweled clip and a pair of three-inch heels the way you do, you wear a gingham apron rather well."

Dee let her long lashes brush slowly back. Terry Jarvis could understand that if that was supposed to be a compliment, it was a very poor effort. But Dee felt suddenly queer. She felt all smothered, and her heart was racing crazily under the frill of the pink gingham.

Terry went out of the room. Then she heard him moving about, locking doors and windows. A regular wind-up-the-clock and put-out-the-cat sort of man! Who would have thought it of the suave, handsome Terry, who knew his way so well about town and called head waiters by their first names?

Then, suddenly, Dee stood frozen at her task, the milk bottle she was

washing held between her crimson-tipped fingers like a cocktail shaker. Was this, after all, a plot—a boomerang plot which had swung around and aimed itself at her? Could this be one of those desert-island ideas of the movies, in which the hero and the heroine get stranded on a tropical isle for the night, and the palm trees do a lot of whispering? Could Terry Jarvis by any chance be harboring similar motives? A little house in the country was just about as isolated as a desert island.

Terry came into the room.

"Why so quiet?" he asked.

"I'm thinking."

"Swell place to think, isn't it? I've been getting a lot of thinking done out here."

Dee suddenly handed him the washed milk bottle. "In the country," she said, "you put them on the front doorstep instead of the back."

"O. K.," he said, and dutifully took the bottle. The moment he was well in the front part of the house, Dee grabbed up his car keys which still lay on the table, and dashed out the back door, down through the darkness and the long grass to his car.

She forgot why she had come out here; she forgot her hat. She had come out here on a bus, but of course busses wouldn't be running at this time of night. Anyway, she had to escape from Terry Jarvis because one night Terry had held her hard in his arms, and then his words had mocked her. Terry thought she was a little fool and she probably was, but all she could think of now was to get away.

Her fingers shook, trying to slip the key into the ignition. Then the kitchen door opened, and there was Terry, huge and determined, coming down the garden path toward her.

"Your hat and bag," he said, handing the items to her and chuckling gently. "And did you know you are still wearing your apron?" Then, suddenly, he slid into the car beside her, and his hands reached out and caught her wrists.

"Dee," he said, "look. You came out here to tell me something, didn't you? And you're running away without telling me. You can't do that."

She didn't try to get away from his hands. She felt helpless and, all at once, terribly tired. Something ached in her throat—something strange and new—and the words she had to say couldn't get past that ache.

Then Terry had her in his arms. He held her hard, with her smallness pressed close against the mad thumping of his heart, and his cheek laid on her smooth, dark head. He kept murmuring: "Dee, my darling," as a man would exult over something he had thought lost.

All at once she wasn't afraid any more. Now she understood the sleepless nights and the maddening desire to find Terry, and why she wanted to find him. Terry had been right that night. Back in his arms once more, she was suddenly wise and understanding.

Terry set a hand under her chin and tipped her young face up to his lean, sturdy one.

"Darling," he whispered, "you love me. You've always loved me. That was what you wanted to tell me, wasn't it, my sweet?"

She lifted her arms and closed them about the broad shoulders bent above her. When it had been a question of love she had never known the answer, but now she knew the answer even to that. Terry Jarvis, with his words that had cut deep, had carved it upon her heart. And with this sudden, precious knowledge she lifted her face and whispered tremulously:

"Yes."



STRONG ONE

I HAVE called you fragile as a flower,
I have named my orchids after you,
I have feared you would not last the hour
When skies have turned a slightly darker blue.

I have thought you some fine carved treasure
Made for me to hide from every harm.
I have walked on clouds in exquisite pleasure
To feel your feather fingers on my arm.

And now I wonder that you never tire
To cover as you do such distant lands,
For as I span the earth, before my fire,
I find my world is always in your hands!

SEYMOUR GORDEN LINK.



Unforgettable Night

By Una Bunker

ANN felt her heart pounding as she sat in Della Kinner's small, dilapidated cabin, listening to Ben Wayne chopping wood outside.

It wouldn't mean anything, seeing Ben again, Ann had been so sure last week, when she came up from the city to visit her grandfather, old Gilson Fordyce, at Blue Gorge Mine. She smiled now at the dryness in her throat, as Della went on, telling her of Ben.

"He's been so good to us since dad cut his hand," Della was saying, and her thin, young face grew soft with momentary beauty. "He's slaved from daylight until after dark to get the sluicing done."

Through the open doorway, Ann could see the river tumbling along in the cool shadow of the canyon morning. Up the alder-filled gorge, were scattered the tents and cabins of people like Della, her father and Ben Wayne, who had come from every-

where, seeking what poor living they could find in the river's old, worked-over gold gravel.

Ann saw Ben coming across the dooryard, his arm piled with wood.

He stopped short on the threshold as he caught sight of her sitting in the dingy room, and his jaw tightened with the impulse to turn about and leave. But after the instant's hesitation, he strode across to the woodbox in the corner, piling in the lengths of wood.

His dark head was bare, the sleeves of his faded blue shirt rolled high on arms burned to the color of brown earth.

As he straightened up, Ann rose and went toward him, her hand out.

"Hello, Ben," she murmured. She felt the brief pressure of his big, calloused fingers.

Ann tried to say lightly, "I'm visiting grandfather up at Blue Gorge Mine."

She hadn't been up this way in years—not since one sun-filled day, and a night ablaze with stars.

Ben's gaze went over her slowly, as if he would see her fully once again—the alive, bright loveliness of her hair and eyes, the whole air of daintiness and fine living about her slender form, clad in breeches and sweater of tangerine-colored wool.

Ann looked past him, out of the small window of the cabin.

On the narrow mountain road, a short way above the cabin, stood a roadster. The young man lounging behind the wheel was as fair as Ben was dark, his close-cropped blond head handsome above his trim outgoing clothes.

"Ross Grant is up for a couple of weeks," she said. Her words were carefully casual as she went on:

"You remember Ross Grant, Ben?"

Ben Wayne nodded. "We graduated from college together in mining engineering, I believe."

Ann's cheeks warmed at his faint, ironical smile. He knew that she and Ross were engaged, of course.

She saw Della watching them wistfully.

"Ben and I grew up together, down below here several miles," Ann explained. "Ben used to let me help him herd the turkeys on his father's farm. I loved those old grassy hills, blue in spring with lupine! And then"—beneath Ann's laughing eyes, her breath deepened—"we quarreled through high school, and college."

Ben met her gaze coolly, humor and bitterness in his own. She hadn't always called it quarreling, Ann remembered. It was something as wild and young and sweet as the dawn wind over those hills.

She wished now that she hadn't asked Ross to drive her down this morning. But her grandfather had insisted that he must know how Kinner's hand was getting along.

"And you might say hello to Ben," he had added in a gruff aside, as Ross went out to get the car. "He's camped down there near Kinner's cabin." Her grandfather's old countenance grew curiously soft whenever he spoke

of Ben. He had always been fond of Ben, Ann knew. His disinterest in Ross Grant piqued and disappointed her.

She turned to Della. "Grandfather said not to bother about coming up to the house to-morrow if your father isn't better."

Della had been coming up to the big house on the ridge to wash once a week, and help at odd jobs.



"Oh, dad'll be better to-night, I'm sure," Della said, glancing toward the closed door of the one other room the cabin contained. "He's sleeping now. But we've been up several nights. He's been half crazy with pain." Della's eyes filled with tears of weariness and dejection.

She looked so forlorn and alone in her heavy shoes and faded cotton dress. A thread of emotion ran through Ann, as Ben stood comforting Della, his broad shoulders looming against the light from the outer door. He seemed unconscious of the dead weariness that shadowed his own temples and mouth.

"I'll sit up with your father to-night," he said to Della. "You must get some sleep."

Was Kinner's hand as bad as that? Ann went back up the trail to Ross Grant, wondering if she shouldn't have offered her help. She had taken a course in first aid last winter, along with her busy round of social activities. Ben would be surprised, she mused, if he knew she had studied anything so practical.

"How did you find your river friends?" Grant asked, as she climbed back into the car. He was faintly amused, Ann knew, at the interest she had taken in the poor families on the river.

"Not very good," Ann said. "Kinner hasn't been able to do any sluicing all week."

Ross Grant turned the car expertly on the narrow bench of the road. "It wouldn't mean much either way, would it?" he shrugged. "They can't get much gold from that old, worked-over gravel."

"No, not much," Ann returned. "But it makes the difference between eating and starving, or asking for charity, Ross."

Grant's eyes were fixed on her in a lazy humor. Wealthy always, he

had never known an hour of want or discomfort in his whole life, Ann reflected.

"Kinner was one of the men who tramped the State all last year, looking for a job," she went on. "The same as Ben Wayne has done since we graduated from college. He's down there on the river, shoveling gravel from daylight until dark." Ann smiled. "You ought to see grandfather's eyes twinkle when he sees him. Ben doesn't know it, but he's working on the same spot that grandfather panned sixty years ago."

"Poor devil!" Grant put the car into low, as they climbed the steep grade of the canyon road. "I always said that college was a waste of time for a fellow like that. Grubbing through four years, at whatever he could find to do, just to get a degree. If he'd given up his high ideas and gone to work three or four years ago, he might not have been out like this. Why didn't he stay on the farm?"

"Raising turkeys, Ross?" Ann laughed. "When they could scarcely give them away these last few seasons?"

She looked back over the years, seeing a boy's rapt face. Dark, intense and young, it had gazed off over the rolling hills washed in sunset light. He wouldn't always be herding turkeys, the boy was saying defiantly. He had dropped down beside the girl sitting in the grass near his side.

"You believe it, Ann?" His dark head had lain for a still moment against her knee. "You believe in me?"

How completely she had, all through high school, and even after they had gone down to the coast to college!

Furiously, she had blazed at her mother that one mad, beautiful night so long ago, that she never

would forget Ben—that she never could! He was her whole life!

But the days had gone on after that, busy with the social affairs that her mother carefully planned for her, meeting just the right people of wealth and family, softening old memories, turning away the glory of young vows.

And during her last year of college, Ann had sat in the stadium, watching Ross Grant flash across the gridiron to his spectacular victories. She had given scarcely a thought to Ben, who was waiting on tables down the street at Barney's Kitchen, paying his way through college.

With an effort, Ann recalled herself to the present.

"Grandfather is getting the gold fever again," she said abruptly. "He's thinking of opening Blue Gorge Mine."

Grant commented mildly: "He's getting pretty old, isn't he? I thought that the quartz vein in Blue Gorge had narrowed until it hardly paid, when he closed the mine several years ago."

"It had," Ann answered. "But it would make a profit now, he says, since gold is up in price. Besides, the vein might widen again. That's the thrill of gold mining, Ross." Her eyes softened. "It would be wonderful to see old Blue Gorge a real town again."

They had topped the grade, and the faded red buildings of the mine appeared, scattered among the pines along the canyon's edge. Above it, in an orchard of gnarled apple trees, stood the white clapboard house of Ann's grandfather, cozy and inviting behind its picket fence. The abandoned town lay a short way farther on, its gray, weather-beaten houses nestling in a tangle of bridal wreaths and moss roses.

LS-9E

Ann glanced up at Grant. "Can you imagine what I'm thinking?"

Ross Grant smiled good-humoredly. "I can't."

Her pause was faintly breathless.

"I'm thinking how perfect it would be if you went in with him. That's why I wanted you to come up, Ross—to see what you thought. We'd have to live up here a good part of the year, but I wouldn't mind. I always was a small-town girl, and I'm getting tired of the city—bridge, teas, golf and dances."

Ross Grant busied himself with his driving, saying nothing.

"You know"—her hand crept beneath his arm—"I've planned on being the wife of a mining engineer."

"Not that kind." Grant shook his head decisively. "I wouldn't be content, grubbing a bare day's wage out of an old, worked-out hole in the ground." He laughed, his face slightly flushed. "Not when I don't have to, Ann."

He was waiting for something bigger, his silence told her. He had plenty of money to wait any length of time. Why not enjoy themselves when they could? Hadn't they planned a honeymoon trip around the world?

"A worked-out hole in the ground," Ann murmured to herself. "Old Blue Gorge, whose fifty glorious, yielding years had brought fame and wealth to the Fordyce family?"

That night Ann went out to Gil Fordyce, as he sat smoking a last pipe on the veranda.

"He wouldn't do it, grandfather."

Her grandfather puffed in silence for several moments. "He wouldn't, eh? I didn't think he would."

Ann sat, hunched against the porch post, watching a late moon coming up over the gorge. A great quarter orange, it gleamed through the pines along the ridge, filling the

canyon with much blacker shadows.

"I'd like to ask Ben Wayne," her grandfather said gruffly. "I always knew that Ben and I could get along, if we had half a chance. Ever since you——"

But Ann had risen, and gone into the house to bed.

She might have known that Ross wouldn't be interested in Blue Gorge. Why had she come up here?—she asked herself, as she lay at the window, looking out at the starlit night. A night like one so long ago—— Ann lay, her body tense in the darkness.

Della didn't come up to work the next day.

"Ann, you'd better go down and see that hand of Kinner's," her grandfather bade, as they finished supper on the veranda. "I'm worried."

Ann looked across at her fiancé. "Take me down, Ross?"

"Of course." But why all this fuss about a band of riffraff on the river?—his faint shrug was saying.

Silently, Ann rode beside him down the dusky stillness of the canyon road. As he turned the car into the bank a short way above the Kinner cabin, she said on a sudden impulse: "Please come with me, Ross."

Ross Grant got out and went with her toward the ramshackle dwelling.

Della opened the door at their knock. The girl's face was white and drawn in the smoky light of the lamp that burned behind her on the table. She invited them inside, glancing, shy and embarrassed, at the man beside Ann.

Ben was standing in the shadow near the stove. He came forward as Ross Grant stretched a hand toward him affably. His level, cool glance

told Ann nothing, as he shook hands with Grant.

Ross looked about the room with an air of detached interest. He had never seen a room like this in his life before, Ann surmised.

She turned to Della. "How is your father?" she asked.

"He's pretty bad." Della's lip trembled.

Ben had gone through the doorway into the room beyond.

"May I go, too?" Ann asked, and Della nodded.

Ross sat down on one of the stools beside the table. Ann was suddenly sorry that she hadn't left him out in the car, where he had wanted to stay.

She went in to Kinner.

"Pretty no account." Kinner's sick eyes looked up at her. His bandaged hand lay on the covers before him.

Ann's breath suddenly thickened in her throat. A threadlike red line ran up the inside of Kinner's arm. Blood-poisoning! Her course had taught her that much. Ann stood beside Ben, thinking fast, hearing her heart's frightened thumping.

Abruptly, she bent over the man on the bed. "I'm going to fix up that hand," she said, her voice warm and gentle. "Ben doesn't know what a good doctor I am."

She went out to Ross Grant.

"I'm going to stay with Della tonight," she told him. "I want you to go up home and get me some heavy towels and these things I'll need." She gave him a list, going with him to the door.

"Can't we get some woman down here on the river?" Grant asked with a frown. "I'll phone down to Pinevale for the doctor."

"He wouldn't get here until morning, Ross, and we can't wait."

With a lift of brows, Ross strode



Ann sat down on a boulder and watched Ben shoveling gravel into his sluice box. Finally, Ben said shortly: "Why do you keep coming down here. I'm not your kind. You saw that long ago."

away into the darkness. Ann turned back inside the cabin.

"Get a fire going," she said to Ben. "We'll need some hot water."

It was ready when Ross Grant returned with the articles that Ann had sent him for. Grant offered to stay, but Ann told him he wouldn't be needed. She heard his car hurrying back up the grade.

Hours passed by after that, while Ann worked beside Ben, Della's

frightened eyes watching from the shadows. Some time after midnight, Ann said softly:

"I believe his fever is going down. Yes!" Her eyes shone, as she looked up from the thermometer she had asked Ross to bring.

Kinner murmured in drowsy comfort: "I'll be out on the river before you know it now, Ben, my boy."

With a sob, Della sank to her knees beside her father, and his smile into his daughter's eyes held a sweetness that brought moisture to Ann's lashes.

"We'll let him rest now," Ann whispered to Ben.

She went out to the dooryard and

stood looking at the night about her, listening to the river's roar. She had saved Kinner's life—she and Ben! A strange smother of sadness mingled with the joy in her heart.

She scarcely knew when Ben came out, she was so deep within herself, but he was standing there beside her. Ann could see the frame of his broad shoulders outlined against the stars.

"I want to thank you for what you've done to-night," he spoke at last.

The scent of lupine came from the mountainside back of them. Its delicate fragrance flooded the night, as it had a night so long ago.

"Aren't the stars beautiful, Ben?" Ann whispered. Her throat filled with sudden tears.

Ben hunched his shoulders. His tone was level and cold as he said:

"You always were sentimental at the right times, Ann."

Ann winked back the tears, glad of the darkness.

"And you never were sentimental, Ben?" Her voice was silken in its anger.

Ben said shortly: "I'm not now, at least." He turned. "I'm going to get some sleep."

She heard his footsteps crunching away along the gravel flat toward his tent up the river. Ann stood motionless in the darkness until the light of his candle glowed beyond the alders. After several minutes, it winked out, and the canyon lay in its former blackness.

Ann went back inside the cabin.

Della was huddled asleep on the bunk in the corner of the kitchen.

Quietly, Ann sat down, resting her arms on the table. She looked slowly about the blackened walls of the small room. To Ross Grant it was a hovel, she said to herself, yet within its narrow space was all of living—hope, despair and love. She had

seen it all in Della's eyes to-night—love, worship of Ben Wayne.

Ben worked out on the river at his sluice box during the days after that, whenever Ann came down to see Kinner. He was keeping out of her way, Ann knew.

She went out across the rocks one early morning two weeks later, and sat down on a boulder, watching Ben shoveling gravel into his sluice box.

Ben's face, half turned from her, was somber with irritation.

"Why do you keep coming down here?" he asked her shortly, at last. "Kinner is O. K. now."

Ann answered calmly: "You know I always loved to walk at dawn, Ben. And Ross doesn't." She smiled, shrugging faintly. "A small difference in tastes, that's all."

Ben turned back to his work.

She watched his big body bending to the gravel bank, lifting, swinging each shovelful of sand and rocks into the sluice box. Their roll and clatter sounded sharply on the canyon's stillness.

Ann murmured abruptly: "Della's a sweet girl, Ben."

Ben didn't reply.

"You're thinking of marrying her?"

Half bent over, Ben gripped his shovel, looking up.

"Why not?" The deep color that had flooded his cheeks, slowly receded, leaving him white to the lips. "She needs me. You never did."

Ann looked down at her boots, filmed with the dust of her two-mile walk down the canyon road.

"Yes, Della loves you, Ben," she said softly. "I'm so glad for her."

Ben swung a shovelful of gravel into the trough of the sluice box, his face turned from her. Ann watched the pebbles swirling and dancing along the narrow stream.

Ben's eyes were glinting as he turned back to her.

"I'd thank you and Ross Grant to keep away from here," he said, his voice low and furious. "I'm not your kind. You saw that long ago."

"All right, Ben." Ann stood up, stumbling a little on the loose rocks.

Her soft, lovely eyes looked up into his stormy ones, abruptly misting over. "Wish me happiness, Ben? Ross and I are going to be married next month."

Ben said nothing. He just stood there, his face pale and set. Did he hate her so much?

"Good-by, Ben." Ann didn't offer him her hand, lest he feel its trembling. With a jaunty set of her shoulders, she turned away across the gravel basin toward the slant of the canyon road.

Ross was waiting for her in the car a short way above the Kinner cabin.

"I thought you might like a ride back for breakfast," he told her, as he swung the car door open for her. He lighted a cigarette deliberately, then started back up the grade.

"I went in to see how Kinner's hand was getting along," he said casually. "About well, he tells me."

"Yes," Ann returned. "He's going back to work to-morrow. Then Ben can take it easier. He looked pretty tired this morning."

"He did?" The words were unpleasant. Ann looked at her companion. Had he seen her out there on the river with Ben?

Grant went on: "Shaking down old claims on the river isn't the easiest work in the world."

He explained, as Ann stared at him: "You said that part of the river bank belongs to your grandfather, didn't you?"

"Yes," Ann answered. "But it has been worked over by every one

wandering along the river for the past fifty years. Grandfather's almost forgotten it's his, and Ben doesn't know it is," she went on evenly. "If he did, he wouldn't stay there an instant."

Ross Grant glanced back into the canyon, the gleam of vindictive satisfaction in his eyes hidden behind a disarming smile. He turned back to Ann.

"I've decided to go in with your grandfather as you wanted," he said, "and open the Blue Gorge Mine."

"It's too late, Ross," Ann answered quietly. "Grandfather is going to ask Ben Wayne."

Ross smiled. "I hardly think so." What did he mean?—Ann wondered.

She found out that afternoon.

She was sitting on the veranda after lunch with her grandfather and Ross, when she saw Della toiling up the walk from the canyon road.

Della's hot, tired face twisted into a grimace of misery, as she looked up at the three sitting in the cool ease of awning chairs. Gil Fordyce pulled a chair forward for her, but Della shook her head and remained standing.

She began to speak in quick, uneven tones:

"We didn't know it meant anything to any one, our sluicing down there on the river. We didn't even know the land belonged to you."

"Well, what of it?" Gil's eyes held their usual grim humor.

"Mr. Grant mentioned it this morning, when he was down at the cabin, and somehow"—Della's cheeks flushed a deep-red—"he made it seem as if we were taking things that don't belong to us. He didn't mean it to sound that way, I'm sure," she hastened to add, her eyes puzzled and wistful. "He was

so kind, asking about dad's hand and all."

Kind? A flame of indignation burned through Ann.

Her grandfather bent forward, demanding of Grant: "You told them that?"

Ross Grant lounged back in his chair, with his faint, amused smile. "I mentioned to Kinner the fact that the land was yours." His eyes looked coolly across at Ann. "Ben Wayne has been in my way once before," he said. "I want him to get out of this country."

"You do, eh? Well, I'd say——" Gil Fordyce choked and stopped, glancing toward Ann, as though he would like to say infinitely more. He caught Della's hand in a rough clasp. "You go down and tell Ben and your father not to even think of going," he blustered.

"Ben's gone already." Della's brown hand lifted to her throat, to ease the pain that Ann saw so piteous in her eyes. "He was breaking camp when I left down there a while ago."

She turned to Ann. "You thought he loved me, but he didn't. I've known it for a long time. I've known what you and he were to each other." The girl's voice quivered and stopped for a moment, then went on:

"But Ben would have married me. I wanted to, too," she whispered. "It would serve you right, I said to myself, for what you have done to him—coming up here, and spreading Ross Grant and all his money before Ben's eyes. But you've been so good to us—you and your grandfather. And Ben's so splendid"—Della swallowed a sob—"but I couldn't marry him when he still loves you."

Ann rose in a single swift movement, and stood leaning against the porch post, staring at Della.

"He still loves me?" she whispered. "You're quite sure, Della?"

Della nodded, brushing at the tears that came.

Ann turned, with a laugh that was half a sob, and ran down the steps toward her grandfather's car parked in the driveway.

Ross Grant took the steps in a stride, catching her by the arm. "If you go down to that fellow," he said, "this is the end of everything between us, Ann."

Ann's glance flashed the length of his handsome, well-groomed form.

"It is, anyway, Ross, whether I find Ben or not. Couldn't you possibly guess that?"

Grant stood incredulous, silent, as she climbed into the car. Pity mingled with Ann's scorn. He was so sure, so proud of himself; he had no idea how petty and cruel he was!

"Ben's gone," she heard Della calling after her dully, as she started the car out the drive.

He couldn't be! Ann sent the car madly down the rutted old road.

But Ben was gone, she found, when she reached the river.

Dazedly, Ann looked down at the wet ashes of his camp fire, at the trampled leaf mold all about, where he had strode back and forth, getting his pack together. The last print of his boots led off along the trail up the canyon.

"Oh, Ben!" With a smothered sob, Ann ran up the pathway.

Dusk crept down across the ridges as she stumbled along the rocks, and one by one the stars came out in the pale vault of the sky.

Ann came upon Ben at last.

He paused on the trail as he heard her footsteps scrambling along the stones behind him, and he stood waiting for her to come up, his shoulders bent forward slightly beneath his heavy pack. In the



gathering darkness, his face was a set, cold mask.

"Put your pack down, Ben." Ann spoke breathlessly. "I want to talk to you."

"There is nothing to talk about,"

he said. "And I want to get over to North Fork before midnight."

Ann's cheeks were colorless beneath the disheveled brightness of her hair. She said, low-voiced:

"You must listen to me, Ben."

Ben swung the heavy pack down onto the fallen log at his side, and stood with visible impatience.

She began hurriedly: "Grandfather needs some one to help him at Blue Gorge Mine—a man he can trust, who's not afraid of work. He wants you, Ben."

"Ross Grant is the fellow for him," Ben said. "He couldn't find any one better."

Ann swallowed over the smarting dryness in her throat. "Ross is going back to the city. Grandfather wants you, Ben."

"I'm sorry. I can't stay."

She looked at him standing there on the river bank. He was like one of the gray stones behind him.

"Why, Ben?"

She caught her breath at the sudden hatred that blazed in Ben's eyes. Was Della wrong, after all, about his love?

"I'll tell you why," he said evenly. "Because I won't take anything from the Fordyce family. Your mother told me once what I was, and you've shown me, too. I've tried to keep out of your way." His nostrils quivered on a deep breath. "I'm going over to North Fork. Just keep moving on, a common tramp."

Ann's head drooped.

"You, a tramp? Why, Ben"—her throat thickened, and she was unable to go in for long seconds—"I've seen you working down here these past weeks, taking care of Della and her father, slaving from daylight until after dark, just as you did all through high school and college, while I was playing. I've seen you holding your head up, when you've never had a break in all your life. I've seen a man, Ben." She drew closer. "Won't you stay?" The words were filmed with huskiness.

"No."

"Then"—her heart was in the

shyness of the eyes lifted to him—"I am going with you, Ben."

Blindly, Ben stared at her.

"Hasn't a wife a right to go with her husband?" she asked in low, hurried tones. "A day of marriage and an annulment might mean nothing, sometimes. But when it was us, Ben," she whispered, "I can't seem to look past it."

Ben stood, his face in the shadow, not saying a word.

Ann whispered, trembling: "If you have forgotten that night up here at grandfather's before mother came and found us, I haven't, Ben."

Ben swallowed, with a sound that was almost a groan.

"Forgotten, Ann?" he said thickly. "Oh, my sweet darling!" His arms reached out for her.

He pressed her to him hungrily, burying his face in her bright hair. And Ann gave her slim loveliness to his embrace, clinging with the frantic sweetness of longing and loneliness.

Her lashes were wet as she whispered: "Mother said I was too young to think of marriage, but we had loved each other long enough then to know. I see it now."

And Ben murmured huskily: "You've been a part of me all my life, Ann darling."

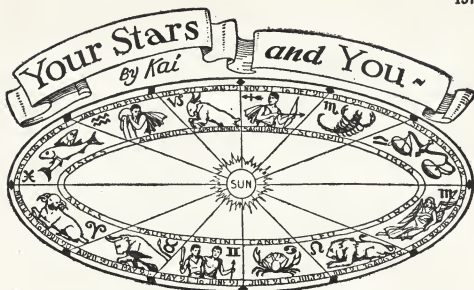
The river tumbled along behind them, and the stars grew silver-bright in the deepening blue-black of the sky.

After a long, breathlessly sweet while, Ann spoke softly, her face hidden against the rough warmth of Ben's flannel shirt:

"Grandfather needs us so at Blue Gorge, Ben."

Ben's eyes shone in the warm darkness as he swept her slender form close.

"And I need you, my darling," he whispered, his lips on hers.



YOUR WEEK

During the week, matters affecting the heart, the employment, and marriage will come prominently to the fore, with quick transition one to the other. There will be unexpected happenings which will affect the lives of a great many people, particularly with the meeting of new friends and the cementing closer together of friendships long formed. In many quarters, there will be considerable worry over employment; but financial and other assistance coming from beneficent sources will tide over the stressful period in most cases where hardship is threatened. There will be considerable public activity, furnishing jobs to many people who have heretofore sought employment in vain. A general improvement in finances will be noticed throughout the week.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

**Saturday,
January
11th**

h

During the early-morning hours you will give much thought to love matters and a short journey may be taken with friends. Unexpected developments may occur, showing rivalry for the affections of some one dear to you. Be very careful until after 9:30 a. m. The rest of the morning you may find routine; and also, most likely, most of the afternoon. Along about 6 p. m., opportunity may pre-

**Sunday,
January
12th**

☾

sent itself for you to advance marriage plans, if you have marriage in view. But be guarded again around 7 p. m., and do not lose your temper no matter what the provocation.

The very early-morning hours are favorable for planning your future with reference to finances, love, and employment. Around 7 a. m., you may be thrilled with the prospects of some pleasant work. Be careful to avoid, if possible, discussions or actions with relation to marriage between 11 a. m. and noon, and do not seek employment at that hour of the day. Around 1 p. m., avoid if possible being placed in an unfavorable light before your employer by one who may be endeavoring to serve selfish ends. Do not lose your head and, in the evening, particularly around 9:30, be careful that you do not have a misunderstanding with some one loved by you; also avoid short journeys, if possible.

**Monday,
January
13th**

☾

During the early-morning hours, there may be some unfavorable developments with respect to employment, other people's finances, and travel.

Also, some one may attempt to interfere in your marriage plans in an underhanded manner. Around 7 a. m., you will feel quite elated over some information possibly, which you have received relative to employment; about 8 a. m. you should be prepared for some possible sudden happening which will affect your finances. However, you will meet the situation, if it comes, with finesse. Be guarded all the remainder of the day. The evening, from about 8 p. m. on, is much better, and favors matters pertaining to employment and journeys. It is a good time to press financial matters.

**Tuesday,
January
14th**

♂

This is a day on which you should carefully guard your tongue, particularly during the morning hours. Be careful what you discuss with friends, and keep your business affairs to yourself. Do not disclose your marriage plans, and if there are any developments with respect to your employment looking toward promotion, carefully refrain from prematurely telling any one about it, lest it have an unfavorable rebound.

**Wednesday,
January
15th**

♀

This is a favorable day for making plans looking toward your marriage and soliciting the aid of friends whose assistance you may need in your marriage plans. Around 2 p. m. is the best time to seek help from those whose help you may need. Between 3:30 and 4 p. m., you may be thrown into contact with some one not favorable to your matrimonial success. Around 5 p. m., or a few minutes earlier, the time is opportune for bringing to fruition new plans you may have heretofore made involving love and marriage; it is likely you may have the opportunity at that time to take a journey or at least date up for one. In the evening, around 8 p. m., there will be

some display of "cattishness" on the part of a jealous rival and things are apt to happen fast and furiously during the remainder of the evening; but keep a cool head and you will come out on top.

**Thursday,
January
16th**

2

This is a day, particularly during the morning hours, of irritating influences which may set your nerves on edge and make you ready to explode at the slightest provocation, particularly in matters involving employment and finances. You should guard your speech well and if you keep a cool head you will profit by the experience in an unexpected manner which may be disclosed to you around 8:45 or 9 a. m. In the afternoon, avoid pushing your plans regarding marriage, as it is an unfavorable time for doing so. In the evening, do not take any journeys if you can avoid it, and be careful of finances.

**Friday,
January
17th**

♀

This is a day of many cross currents which will keep you more or less up in the air throughout the entire day. You should profit, however, by the opportunities which it may present. The early-morning hours may bring some annoyance with respect to love affairs; but also, they bring a clear vision on your part as to what status you should occupy in the matter. There may be some unexpected developments in connection with your finances and employment, which will annoy you considerably, but the reaction will be to your benefit in a subtle way which, at the time, you cannot see. An impetuous friend may assist you greatly in your marriage plans, but you should be alert to see that no miscalculations are made in carrying them out. Anticipate, if possible, any hitches which may occur to the successful termination of your plans. Between 8 and 9 a. m.,

you may have an excellent opportunity to advance the financial interests of your sweetheart, or husband, if you are married. Around 9 a. m., mark time. Between 9:40 to 10 a. m. is good for pushing your marriage and love plans; and the afternoon will bring the assistance of friends who will be interested in your happiness and who may assist you in carrying into effect your marriage plans.



IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th
(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between March 21st and 28th will find this a good time to advance matters pertaining to finances, marriage and business relations. If born between March 28th and April 5th, it is good for financial matters, for cementing friendships, and for business dealings. It is also an excellent time for transactions involving other people's money, and for making plans with respect to long journeys, particularly of the honeymoon variety. If born between April 5th and 12th, it is a good time to push plans for marriage, but not so good for the consummation thereof, nor for occupational matters. If born between April 12th and 20th, matters of the heart will be aided, and friendly help received from others with respect to marital affairs. It will be an unsettled time for matters involving employment, with rumors and cross currents prevalent.

April 20th and May 21st
(Taurus ♉)

—Taurus people born between April 20th and 28th, will find things happening this week with explosive suddenness. The effect will be chiefly upon personal affairs involving finances and employment. It is a week of potential change for you and you should be prepared to take advantage of any favorable openings. If born between April 29th and May 6th, it is a good time to improve your financial condition; but you should avoid misunderstandings with friends. If born between May 7th and 13th, it is an excellent time for matters pertaining to marriage and employment; but during Saturday, January 11th, make allowance for a rather unsettled condition in love matters. If born between May 14th and 21st, the time is excellent to seek em-

ployment, particularly, on Tuesday, January 14th. Care should be taken during the week to avoid antagonizing friends. It is an excellent period to push marriage plans.

May 21st and June 21st
(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and May 29th, should keep alert in their employment, and avoid giving excuse to any one to undermine them by insidious remarks or actions. You should avoid considerable bodies of water, if possible, and should be careful of your movements in order to avoid danger of falls. If born between May 30th and June 6th, it is a good time for associating with your friends and making new acquaintances; but it is not a favorable time for love-making, and it is a period when you will be inclined to spend money recklessly. Do not become involved in litigation if you can avoid it. If born between June 7th and 13th, be circumspect in matters pertaining to your employment. But Saturday, January 11th, will be a favorable time for advancing love interests. If born between June 14th and 21st, be careful in matters involving employment during Tuesday, January 14th. It is, however, a good time for developing friendships which may ripen into love; and Thursday, January 16th, is a favorable time for advancing your marriage plans.

June 21st and July 21st
(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 28th, will find this an excellent time to push marriage plans. Something favorable may happen involving your finances and you will probably receive the aid of some influential friend in matters of employment. Sunday, January 12th, may bring to you some benefit in connection with your employment; and on Wednesday, January 15th, you should be careful with respect to marital affairs. Friday, January 17th, is very favorable for pushing marriage plans. If born between June 29th and July 6th, you will experience some social activity, in which your friends will participate; otherwise, the week will be fairly normal for you. If born between July 7th and 13th, it is an excellent time to seek employment, or gain advancement in that which you already have. Particularly, is Tuesday, January 14th, favorable in this regard, but do not antagonize the employer. Also, matters of the heart may be expedited on Saturday, January 11th; but mark time with respect to your marriage plans on Thursday, January 16th. If born between

July 14th and 21st, Saturday, January 11th is favorable for matters pertaining to the affections; and in matters of employment, Tuesday, January 14th, should prove favorable but do not irritate the employer. Mark time with respect to your marriage plans.

July 21st and August 22nd
(Leo ♌)

—Leo people born between July 21st and 29th, should be careful at this time with respect to matters pertaining to the heart and to the finances. You should avoid so far as possible setting into motion forces which may have a sudden recoil. Wednesday, January 15th, is favorable for advancing your marriage plans; while you should mark time on Friday, January 17th, with respect thereto. If born between July 30th and August 6th, it is a good time for courtship; but handle your friends with care lest you offend them. A journey may be undertaken, with profitable results. If born between August 7th and 14th, Saturday, January 11th is a good day for courtship; and Monday, January 13th, is a good day to seek employment or advancement if already employed, although the entire week is favorable in matters pertaining to employment. There may be some delay in your going to work, or gaining advancement in your employment even when it looks certain that you will attain what you have asked for. If born between August 15th and 22nd, Tuesday, January 14th is good for matters of employment; while Thursday, January 16th, and Friday, January 17th, are good times to push your plans for marriage. Avoid disputes with hot-headed friends.

August 22nd and September 23rd
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people born between August 22nd and 29th, should be careful in matters pertaining to employment, lest they in some manner displease the employer. Some unexpected good fortune may occur, pertaining to your finances. If born between August 30th and September 7th, avoid lovers' quarrels and disputes with lawyers, and avoid litigation. If born between September 8th and 15th, it is an excellent period to seek employment, particularly on Tuesday, January 14th. Also, it is a good time to advance marriage plans. If born between September 16th and 23d, it is an excellent time respecting matters pertaining to employment; particularly, Tuesday, January 14th. Thursday, January 16th, and

Friday, January 17th, are good times in which to advance your marriage plans.

September 23rd and October 22nd
(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and October 1st, will find Tuesday, January 14th, and Wednesday, January 15th, excellent days in which to further their marriage plans. If born between October 2nd and 8th, it is a good time for matters pertaining to love, business, and finance. If born between October 9th and 15th, you should mark time with respect to your marriage plans, and do not offend your employer. It is an excellent time for social recreation in the company of friends. If born between October 16th and 22nd, your marriage plans may be advanced on Thursday, January 16th and Friday, January 17th. An impulsive friend may lend aid to you with respect to your marriage.

October 22nd and November 22nd
(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 22nd and 29th, should be careful to avoid disputes in their marital relations which might lead to separation. If born between October 30th and November 6th, it is a good time for courtship and, also, for matters pertaining to business. Avoid quarrels with your friends, however. If born between November 7th and 14th, it is an excellent time for matters pertaining to employment; also, it is a good time to advance your marriage plans. If born between November 15th and 22nd, this is a good period for matters pertaining to employment, particularly Tuesday, January 14th. Avoid disputes with friends.

November 22nd and December 20th
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 29th, should avoid riling the employer. Something unexpected may happen, affecting your finances, possibly of an unfavorable nature. If born between November 30th and December 6th, it is an excellent time for courtship and marriage, and for the forming of new friendships with marriage ultimately in view. Be careful in matters involving employment. If born between December 7th and 13th, matters will remain about normal. If born between December 14th and 20th, it is a good time for the cementing of friendships, and your marriage plans may be advanced on Thursday, January 16th, and Friday, January 17th.

December 20th and January 19th
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 20th and 28th, will find this a good period with respect to occupational matters and, also, for the purpose of making marriage plans. Unexpected good fortune may occur regarding your finances. If born between December 29th and January 5th, it is a good time for courtship and travel. Also, for social activities. If born between January 6th and 12th, employment is affected beneficially. If born between January 13th and 19th, it is an opportune time to press matters regarding your occupation, particularly on Tuesday, January 14th. Mark time with respect to matrimonial matters on Thursday, January 16th, and Friday, January 17th.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 19th and 27th, may meet with some unexpected drains on their pocketbook at this time. If born between January 28th and February 4th, it is an excellent time for making new friends and coming to a closer understanding with the old ones. It is also a good time for courtship and for advancing the financial interests generally. Also, marriage plans may be formed or carried into effect at this time, particularly Wednesday, January 15th, and Thursday, January 16th. If born between February 5th and 12th, Thursday, January 16th, is a good time with respect to marriage matters. If born between February 13th and 19th, you may gain a new friend who is very impulsive; and your marriage plans may be advanced on Friday, January 17th.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 28th, should be careful to avoid falling, and also should keep away from large bodies of water. Some unexpected good fortune may occur which will benefit the finances. If born between February 28th and March 6th, a good time is probable, socially, but you should avoid lovers' quarrels and spending money recklessly. If born between March 7th and 13th, matters pertaining to employment will be somewhat unsettled. If born between March 14th and 21st, employment matters, though somewhat unsettled, will adjust themselves more favorably.

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★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
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Mrs. S. H. T. S., born July 21, 1879, 9 p. m., Texas: It is quite evident, from looking at your horoscope, that you have suffered severe financial reverses recently. I am glad to say that, in my opinion, the worst for you is past, and that better times are coming in the near future. Do not expect too much improvement immediately. The change for the better will come slowly as different malefic planetary influences, one by one, let go. In about two or three years, you should have a very pleasant and successful period, in which your financial difficulties should be greatly improved. Some of the good fortune at that time will probably come unexpectedly. Make the most of your opportunities.

Miss G. H., born November 25th, 1917, 6 p. m., California: A comparison of your horoscopes shows a great many harmonies existing between them, and but few discords. It would seem, therefore, that you and your boy friend can make a happy and lasting marriage if you try to do so. The prospects are that you may be married within the next year, but will have to make up your mind to be subjected to some annoyances and, possibly, some financial difficulties for a time; but finances for both of you would seem to improve during the next two years.

Mrs. E. K., born April 21, 1897, New York City: There are many things to be considered in a marriage between you and the man whose birth date you sent in. It looks as though, in about a year, this man may suddenly marry. Whereas, it is not so certain that you, at that time, will be in a similar frame of mind. If you postpone marrying him, it is possible that your present attitude toward each other may change during the next few months. There is much about you which attracts him, both from the standpoint of love and intellect. At the same time, there may be disagreements between you in matters of finances. There are a number of other things concerning which you will disagree. The harmonies and discords between you are about evenly balanced, and if you marry this man, you should stress the harmonies between you and, so far as possible, ignore matters which cause difference of opinion.

You may both find it hard to adjust yourselves to each other. Whether marriage to this man would be successful, depends, as I see it, upon the determination of both of you to make of it a success.

Miss E. R., born February 26, 1909, Nebraska: You will have a number of chances to marry during 1936, and it looks as though you will take advantage of one opportunity early in 1937. When you meet the right man, you will know why you have heretofore waited, although wanting to be married. It is that you have sensed that, so far, the right one has not crossed your path.

Miss V. M., born March 15, 1915, 7:30 p. m., Nebraska: You ask whether or not you will marry the man whose birth date you sent me. This, of course, is something I cannot tell you as the stars influence but do not compel obedience. It seems that your boy friend has been having rather an unsettled time the past year or two, particularly with reference to finances. A better year for him in most respects will be 1936, and 1937 will be an improvement over 1936. You are apt to be unsettled yourself, during 1936; particularly with reference to deciding what you want to do. You will find it hard to make up your mind definitely on some matters which directly or indirectly will affect your proposed marriage. Mentally, you two seem very congenial on some subjects; but you do not seem to agree so well on questions involving money, and I believe there will be some differences of opinion in matters of religion. It seems that in matters pertaining to the heart he is what you possibly consider as odd, having a mixture of ardent fire well under control, with a subtle way of doing pleasing things which, sometimes perhaps, you do not find so pleasing, due to your own difference in viewpoint. The combinations are such that you would have to make the most of the harmonies between you and ignore so far as possible the discords which exist. You understand, of course, that very few people have horoscopes which are entirely harmonious one with the other; and, in fact, few people have horoscopes which are entirely harmonious with themselves. It is possible that you might marry this man during 1936, if you are very desirous of doing so; but I am inclined to think that it will be 1936, and then only if you are determined upon the marriage.

L. V. B., born April 3, 1906, New Hampshire: You say that the only time you are

really contented is when you are with R. E. M., whose birth date you sent me; and after comparing your horoscopes, I can readily agree with this statement. There are so many harmonies that it would be very foolish for either of you to permit the few discordant features of your natures to overshadow in any way the beauties of agreement existing between you. You should not take issue with him over matters pertaining to domestic life, and he should not take issue with you over matters pertaining to employment. If you can adjust these differences and whatever other differences you may have, you will give full sway to the beneficial harmonies which exist between your natures. Do not have any foolish love quarrels; neither of you really mean it. During 1936, he should be in a very agreeable mental frame of mind, with brighter monetary prospects and probable steady employment of a satisfactory nature. There is an unexpected threat which may impede your marriage, so be on the alert and both of you avoid if possible doing anything which may result in injury to either of you. The prospects for your marriage seem bright during 1937, but you may have to endure some hardship, possibly financial difficulties, after your marriage, until 1938; at which time, a minor marital storm is threatened; after which, should come much love and happiness.

Miss M. A., born December 10, 1909, 7 p. m., Wisconsin: Your nativity indicates that you will marry and it will probably be love at first sight, and marriage immediately thereafter. As I see it, the indications are for your marriage in 1937. I wish to warn you that should you contract this impulsive hasty marriage, you may subsequently be impelled to dissolve it with as little forethought as you entered it.

Miss M. D., born June 30, 1920, on Saturday, 1:15 night: if you were born on June 30, 1920, you were not born on Saturday, but on Wednesday; so you had better check up on your birth date. In answering your question, I will assume that you were born on June 30, 1920. The course of true love seldom runs smoothly, it has been said, and you will probably find, during 1936, firm resistance from some source to your proposed marriage. At that, it is possible that you may be married during 1936; at least, you are going to be very much in love. A more favorable period for your marriage seems to be 1937, and if you do not marry during 1936, you will probably be married in 1937.

A. C. M., born September 15, 1893, South Dakota, female: The planetary indications are that you will have improved health during 1936, and still better health in 1937. There is some indication that you do a lot of needless worrying about yourself. You should consult a physician in such matters and be guided by his advice.

EMMA OF TEXAS, born September 8, 1914, 8:30 p. m., New Mexico: I am sorry to hear of your illness. But sometimes, the sweetest characters are developed under the stress of such adversity and often there are people who can see beyond the misfortune to the strength of character which it has built. During the years 1936 and 1937, you will probably meet a number of people who will not see your crippled body but only the beauty of your soul. And out of this number, if you care to avail yourself of the opportunity, you can probably choose a life partner. As I see it, marriage is not denied to you but is largely dependent upon your coming to a realization of the fact that men do not marry for physical beauty alone. There are many kinds of work which you can train yourself to do, that

will enable you to earn a living without leaving your own home, should you desire it; and you have the ability if you develop it to employ yourself in some employment connected possibly with art, music, flowers, perfumes, cosmetics, or even teaching private classes ranging from small children to possibly specialized instructions to grown-ups. Preparing yourself for possible future contingencies will give you pleasure, as well as happiness, even though you should never find it necessary to earn your own living; added accomplishments will attract attention to your mental and spiritual qualities and cause people to forget that you are physically handicapped.

A. B., born February 12, 1896, 4 a. m., Nebraska: As I see it, in comparing your horoscope with that of your husband, the problem which you must solve in order to come to a better understanding with him, is largely one due to the disparity of your ages. He is fifteen years older than you are. Your nativity indicates that the fires of love still burn fiercely within you, and it is my opinion that when he does not respond as readily as he once did, you feel

HOT HOLLYWOOD NEWS

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ALL NEWS STANDS

that you are ceasing to hold his interest. That does not seem to me to be the case. No matter what the outward appearances may be, your husband recently has been having a trying period with his health which will continue throughout 1936. In the very nature of things, he cannot respond to you as wholeheartedly as you might feel that he should. Your horoscope indicates that, at the present time, your mental viewpoint is somewhat distorted, and this condition, if you are not careful to analyze your thinking, will extend on through 1936. In many other respects, you are under very beneficial influences during 1936 and should be able to come to a better understanding with your husband. However, it would be wise on your part to restrain yourself and try to suit your actions to his moods. His mind will be unusually active and clear thinking during 1936.

MISS WONDERING, born July 3, 1916, Michigan: I am glad to note that you are interested in a literary career and that you have the good judgment to realize that work in the secretarial field would be more certain and practical. However, have you considered combining the two?—that is, try to secure employment that would give you opportunity to develop your literary ability while earning a living doing secretarial work. Your horoscope indicates that you have literary ability but that if you endeavor to make a living solely by that means, you will probably take upon yourself a lot of needless worries. Gratify your literary ambitions as a side line, and you may ultimately reap a considerable financial reward therefrom.

Mrs. L. B., born October 23, 1866, 1 a. m., Georgia: From examining your horoscope, I strongly advise against your investing in a café or rooming house as, under the influences which are at present operating and which will operate throughout 1936, such an investment would be almost certain to be a financial loss for you. Do not mortgage or encumber your home during the present period. It seems to me that your present arrangement of renting

your home and living with your relatives is the best thing for you to do during 1936. I can quite understand that your mind is very clear thinking, and that you are not contented unless doing something. But I advise against engaging in any line of work that involves the investment on your part of more than a few dollars.

MISS E. M. W., born December 30, 1915, 8:45 a. m., Missouri: There is a distinct possibility of your getting married on the impulse of the moment, possibly by elopement. I would suggest that you do a little more preliminary thinking about possible marriage, rather than to be too impulsive when you are faced with the problem.



WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

Kai does not send answers by mail.

MISS F. H. E., born March 18, 1919, 1 p. m., New York State: I cannot advise you with respect to the religion to which you should adhere as that is a matter entirely for each person's own conscience. Would it not be well for you to make the best of matters until you are of age, by which time your present difficulties may automatically be solved?

MRS. PEARL APPLE: I would like very much to advise you, but you neglected to state your birth date and place of birth.

ANXIOUS, born December 24, 1900, 6 p. m., Illinois: Your question is one which it is against the policy of this department to answer.

Mrs. V. M., born February 18, 1909, Poland: Your question is one which we cannot answer in this department. I advise that you consult a physician.

Mrs. C. G. M., born October 7, 1910, Wisconsin: Your question is one which cannot be answered in this department. I would advise you to consult your physician.

Editor's Note: Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.





Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

WHO wants to hear all about the exciting activities on a dude ranch? Those of you who yearn for life in the wide, open spaces should not fail to make friends with Rancherette. She finds every day interesting and thrilling, and will gladly tell you about the glamorous West, its golden sunsets, enchanted mountains, and Salt Lake City, the oasis in the desert. Almost every girl will enjoy hearing from such a correspondent, but I'll let this Pal's letter speak for itself!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl eighteen years of age and live on a dude ranch in Utah, near Salt Lake City. I like people and all outdoor sports, including horseback riding, hiking, swimming, hunting, dancing, and making friends. Every year we have an exciting rodeo in town, and as I have plenty of time I would like to hear from Pals who want to know more about the West. Perhaps some of you Pals who live near by could even be my guests dur-

LS-10E

ing the summer. All letters will be answered promptly, so let's get together, Pals!
RANCHERETTE.

Don't forget to write to this Pal, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another lonely girl who loves to write letters. I am twenty-five, live in New York State, am interested in anything and everything, especially reading, music, and making up scrapbooks. May I hope to hear from you soon, girls?
LILA.

Colorado Girl lives on a ranch.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just another girl of eighteen who would like to find a few Pen Pals. I live on a ranch, and can tell you Pals many things about the West. My favorite hobby is horseback riding, but I also enjoy dancing, swimming, hiking, and movies. Come on, girls, and let's be friends!
COLORADO GIRL.

An Irish Pal from Canada.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another lonely girl who would love to find a few real Pen Pals. I'm twenty years old, Irish,

live in Canada, and will exchange snapshots and souvenirs. Come on, girls, and let me hear from you. I haven't many friends, and will be a true Pal to all who write.

SADIE.

A Pal who lives on an island in Canada.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think there is any chance that some of the Pals who read your Corner would care to write to a lonesome country girl living on an island in Canada? I am fourteen, go to high school, and would like to hear from girls from all over the world. I will answer every letter I receive. I like horseback riding, dancing, and most outdoor sports.

COUNTRY MURIEL.

Don't make him wait too long, boys.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-three years of age, six feet tall, a college graduate, and anxious to correspond with Pen Pals between twenty and twenty-seven years of age, especially singers, actors, dancers, and those who hail from California. But every one is welcome, and I will answer every letter I receive. Come on, fellows, and don't keep me waiting too long.

BEMIDJI.

A boy from Nova Scotia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't some of you fellows please write to a lonely Pal in Nova Scotia? I'm still in my teens, enjoy skating, fishing, and other outdoor sports. I like writing letters, and will be glad to exchange snapshots with any one. Let me tell you some interesting things about Canada, boys.

DOUCE.

Let Wylma M. tell you about Nebraska.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you help me get acquainted with some Pen Pals? I'm a teen-age girl living in Nebraska, have brown hair, blue eyes, and a happy disposition. My favorite hobbies are drawing, writing letters, sleigh riding, and playing ball. I promise to answer all letters. Come on, girls, and let's get acquainted!

WYLMA M.

This Pal is out for a good time.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is an S O S from a lonely girl from the smoky city of St. Louis. I enjoy all good times, am a

senior in high school, like all sports, dancing, parties, and am considered a happy, lively girl. I am eighteen, will exchange anything from snapshots to paper dolls, as my little sister has plenty of the latter. Girls everywhere, please put my name on your list of Pen Pals. ST. LOUIS BLUES.

Girls, send a letter to England.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would very much like to hear from American girls of any age. I'm a girl in my early twenties, live in England, am fond of outdoor sports, and greatly enjoy the movies. I am not exactly without friends, but I like writing letters, and I am sure that I could make mine interesting enough. I'll gladly exchange snapshots and picture post cards.

YORKSHIRE MISS.

Bellwood C. is going abroad next summer.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm another peppy girl of sixteen with a lot of time on my hands. I live in a small town in Illinois, enjoy all outdoor sports, and my people are planning to take me on a trip to Europe next summer. Won't all you girls everywhere please write to me? I promise to answer all letters.

BELLWOOD C.

Don't overlook this plea from Tennessee.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a Tennessee girl of twenty-one who would like to hear from Pals from all over the world. I collect recipes, snapshots, quilt patterns, and anything that is of interest. I have never been out of my home State, but I am sure there are many things I can write about, and will make my replies as interesting as I can.

MAYNELL.

Let her be a big sister to you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am not exactly lonesome, but would like to have lots of friends. I am a girl of nineteen, and if my mother were living I would probably be in college. As it is, I have been a big sister to six younger brothers and sisters. I love to write long letters, enjoy good times, like to read, dance, and listen to music. I'll be waiting for your letters, girls.

SYDELLE.

A peppy Pal for you younger girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please help me find some Pen Pals? I'm a girl of fourteen, like to play baseball, basket ball,

tennis, swim, ride, and love to write long letters. I have never had a Pen Pal, and it would be ever so nice to hear from girls around my age. I'm considered something of a tomboy, but don't let that frighten you, girls. I promise prompt replies.

FLORINNE.

Rusty is fond of the finer things of life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's hoping that I will hear from a few understanding Pen Pals. I'm a young man of twenty-four, appreciate the finer things of life, am very much interested in music, drama, good books, and travel. Come on, boys, and let's get acquainted. I will answer all letters received.

RUSTY.

Cheer up this homesick girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I've just moved to New York from an adorable fishing town five hundred miles away, and am awfully homesick. I am sure hearing from Pen Pals everywhere would cheer me up. I'm a girl sixteen years of age, have wavy, brown hair, gray eyes, and don't like boys. I like to cook, skate, swim, ride, camp, and have a flower garden in the summer. Let's be friends, girls; I'll be waiting for your letters.

QUAINT RUTH.

Lonely Hazel lives in a mining town.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Are there any young married women of my age, twenty-four, who would like to hear from a Pen Pal living in a mining town in Pennsylvania? I'm a married woman, fond of sports, dancing, movies, music, and promise to answer all letters received. I have traveled quite a lot, and have many interesting things to write about. How about it, Pals?

LONELY HAZEL.

This Swedish young man is quite a linguist.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any of the Pals who read your Corner care to correspond with a young man in Sweden? I'm twenty-two, a sports reporter, enjoy all outdoor sports, movies, and making friends. Being Swedish, I speak, read, and write Norwegian and Danish. In addition, any one can write to me in either German, English, Italian, and I also understand some French. I promise to answer all letters, and will make my replies interesting. NILS.

A Montana girl who will tell you about the West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I enter your Corner? I'm a Montana girl of nearly fifteen, with dark-brown hair, hazel eyes, and a happy disposition. Oh, yes, and plenty of freckles. I like to write long letters, and will tell you Pals about the West. I enjoy movies, ice skating, and making friends. Who'll be the first to write to me?

FRECKLED JO.

Boys, get in step with Army.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Michigan man in my twenties, interested in ballroom and exhibition dancing, enjoy sports, and work in a drug store. Come on, fellows, and give me a hand. I'd like to hear from Pals who are also interested in dancing, and those who live in California, but every one is welcome. Let's go!

ARMY.

Let her tell you about her travels.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young married woman of twenty-six, live in a large city in Wisconsin, like crocheting, knitting, sewing, and painting. I have traveled in Canada and the East, will exchange snapshots and picture cards, and promise to answer all letters. Let me hear from you, Pals; I'm sure we can be good friends.

STEFFIE OF WISCONSIN.

Boys, here's a congenial Pal for you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if you can find some space in your Corner for my plea. I'm a young man of twenty-seven, with brown hair and blue eyes, enjoy good music, dancing, and have lots of free time to answer all letters. I live in Brooklyn, New York, and want to hear from Pals from far and near.

NORM.

This Pal dabbles in journalism.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is a plea all the way from Utah. I'm a girl twenty years of age, and letter writing is my pet hobby. I dabble a little in journalism, adore tap dancing, and at present I am working as clerk in a store. I want to hear from girls of my age, but every one is welcome, and I promise faithfully to answer all letters received.

OLGA D.

Married but lonesome.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a plea from a young married woman. I am in my

twenties, have one little girl, and although I am happily married I get very lonesome. I would especially like to hear from Pen Pals from Pennsylvania and West Virginia, but every one is welcome. Who'll write to me?
SOUTHERN LU.

Alamo Bee has never had a Pen Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find room in your Corner for my plea. I'm a country girl of fifteen, enjoy outdoor sports, writing letters, reading, and the movies. I have never had a Pen Pal, and promise to answer all letters promptly. I'll gladly exchange snapshots, and will be a true-blue friend to all who write. I live in Tennessee.

ALAMO BEE.

She's interested in every one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a girl of nineteen who would like to hear from Pen Pals from all over the world. I have reddish hair, blue eyes, enjoy all sports, have my own car, and like to drive it. I work for a printing company, but the work is not steady, so I have lots of spare time to write letters. Please, girls, give me a chance to be your friends.
DOTSY.

Everything interests Reed.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't some one please write to a boy of sixteen? I have black hair, blue eyes, and would especially like to correspond with boys of my age who hail from Alaska, Canada, the South and West. I like swimming and baseball, and will exchange snapshots with every one.

REED.

Give her a chance to be your friend.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another lonesome girl of sixteen looking for Pen Pals. I enjoy all sports, reading, writing letters, and making friends. I have many interesting things to tell you about the city in which I live. So come on, Pals, get out your pens and pencils and let me hear from you. I'll tell you all about myself in my first letter.
TIENE.

She's interested in singing, music, and dramatics.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any one care to correspond with a Georgia Pal? I'm a young married woman of twenty-five, interested in music, singing, dramatics, and

have been offered a job as model if I ever wanted to go to Chicago. Come on, Pen Pals, and let's get together. I will try to make my letters interesting, and I have lots of time to write.
GEORGIA MRS.

Write him about anything that interests you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a tall young fellow of twenty, a high-school graduate, and for the past two years I have been studying commercial art. I like music, sports, swimming, tennis, roller skating, and making friends. I want to hear from every one, and will answer all letters. So come on, boys, and let's get acquainted. Write me about anything that is of interest to you.
DORCHESTER ART.

An interesting Pal from the Blue Grass State.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely girl of nineteen, and would like to hear from Pals everywhere. I like sports, reading, movies, and will answer all letters. I'll gladly exchange snapshots, post cards, and souvenirs with any one who is interested enough to drop me a line. Girls, won't you take me for your friend? I'm sure I can make my replies interesting.
KENTUCKY BETH.

A bride of eighteen.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I do hope you will find room for my letter in your Corner. I'm a bride of eighteen, and would like to correspond with Pals everywhere, regardless of age. I like dancing, and my hobby is collecting match cases. I also enjoy sports. My husband plays in an orchestra, so I am alone a good deal of the time, and get very lonely. I'll answer all letters from far and near.
ENID T.

Cara has lots to tell you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a plea from a twenty-year-old girl from Arkansas. I have recently moved to this State from California, and get very lonely. I like dancing, skating, writing letters, and promise interesting replies. I can tell you many things about California. Won't you let me be your friend, girls?
CARA.

Exchange snapshots with Marlboro Grace.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: S O S! I'm a lively girl of fifteen hoping to find some Pen

Pals. I like movies, dancing, outdoor sports, and writing long, chummy letters. Do any of you girls want to hear about Canada? Then just drop me a line. I'll exchange snapshots with any one. Here's hoping that I won't be disappointed.

MARLBORO GRACE.

Kitchi is interested in short story writing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from Pen Pals from Western United States. I'm a young married woman of twenty-four, live in Alaska, am greatly interested in writing short stories, reading, dancing, and nursing. I will exchange pictures. Here's hoping that all you Pals will not hesitate to write, as I am sure that I can make my letters interesting.

KITCHI.

Montana Tomboy loves the West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a teen-age girl who loves the West, and people say I'm a tomboy. But my pet hobby is making pretty things for my hope chest. I have light hair, blue eyes, a cheerful disposition, enjoy swimming, ball games, and outdoor sports. Hurry, girls, and write.

MONTANA TOMBOY.

She hopes to become a movie star some day.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a happy-go-lucky girl of twelve? I live on a farm, adore dancing, tennis, horseback riding, can play the piano, and hope to become a movie star some day. All you girls between twelve and fifteen, please write to me.

BROWN-EYED DOLL.

He believes friendship is the finest thing in life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man of twenty-seven, enjoy all sports, reading, hiking, movies, and do not care for girls. I believe that sincere friendship is the finest thing in life. I would like to hear from true-blue Pen Pals who enjoy writing letters; will exchange snapshots, and promise prompt replies. Please, fellows, try me.

CALVERT.

Two Pals with a single thought.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two high-school girls fifteen and seventeen years of age who would like to hear from girls of our age. We will exchange snapshots, and

have lots of things to write about as we both have traveled. We will send souvenirs to the first ten Pals who write to us. Girls, everywhere, let's be friends!

JO AND MARGE.

Married Pals, be sure to write to Thora.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a steady reader of your Corner, and hope you will find room for my plea. I'm a young married woman of twenty-one, interested in hearing from Pals everywhere. I enjoy outdoor sports, and will exchange snapshots with all who write. Pen Pals, won't you try me? I'll tell you more about myself in my first letter.

THORA.

Nanetta is hunting for her twin.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea and help me find my twin? I'm a girl whose birthday falls on December 10th. I was born in 1919. All you girls whose birthdays fall on the same date, please write to me. I will be a sincere friend, and promise faithfully to answer all letters received. How about it? I hail from Illinois.

NANETTA.

Good-natured and sociable, but does not care for girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a good-natured, sociable young man of twenty? I do not care for girls, although I make friends easily. I am working in a theater, but have lots of free time to write. I am considered broad-minded, have traveled in Canada, and will exchange snapshots with every one.

H. L. K.

She'll tell you about a world-famous resort.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a Jewish girl of nineteen, like to make friends, and my pet hobby is writing letters. I can tell you about one of the most popular resorts in New York State, and the fun we have here in the summer. I will be interested in anything you Pals have to write, so here's hoping I'll get lots of letters.

CONEY ISLAND GIRL.

A Pal for all who like to write and receive letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a lonely young girl who will answer all letters received, exchange snapshots, and be a true friend to all who like to write long

letters. I like sports, music, collect pictures, and am considered very good-natured. Please, girls, don't disappoint me!

LULU.

All the way from Colorado.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from single and married Pals everywhere. I'm a young married woman of twenty-nine, live in Colorado, and make my living at home, so I am not really lonesome. But letter writing is one of my pet hobbies, so get busy, Pals, and make the mail man work overtime. I'll also be glad to exchange letters with Pals from foreign countries.

GOLDEN EVE.

Lonesome Lola hopes to live on a ranch some day.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I hope to see my plea in print? I'm a girl of twenty-three, like music, dancing, hiking, horseback riding, and hope to live on a ranch some day. I live in Texas, and get very lonesome. Won't some of you Pals please give me a break? I'll answer all letters promptly.

LONESOME LOLA.

Cleveland Pen Pals wanted here.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please help me find some Pen Pals? I am a lively girl of seventeen, live with my married sister and help her with the housework. I would like to have Pen Pals from all over the country, and especially those who live in Cleveland, Ohio. I promise to answer all letters received.

DENNIE.

She wants to hear from Arizona and Texas Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another S O S from a lonely girl of fourteen. I have light hair, blue eyes, live in Kentucky, enjoy singing, movies, outdoor sports, and would love to hear from Texas and Arizona Pals. I will answer all letters promptly, and hope that you will not hesitate to take me for a friend.

SUNNY NELL.

Exchange ideas with Jolly Jerry.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Has a modern young Canadian miss in her early twenties a chance to find some Pen Pals? I am keenly interested in all sports, especially



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hockey. I also like to collect stamps, write letters, and exchange ideas about things that are of interest to other girls of my age. Come one, come all; the more, the merrier!

JOLLY JERRY.

He's planning a world tour.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of twenty-three, was born in Colon, Panama, raised in Chicago, and am now living in Nebraska. I would like to hear from young men everywhere. I have a fairly good education, like all sports, including hunting and fishing, reading, and am planning to take a trip around the world next year. My present profession is boxing. I will exchange snapshots with any one.

SIDNEY EL.

He is all alone in a big city.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a reader of your Corner, and hope that you will help me make friends. I am a young man of twenty-three, live all alone in a big city, know very few people, and get so lonesome I don't know what to do with myself. I enjoy dancing, singing, and appreciate art. I want to hear from Pals everywhere.

T. JAY.

This busy young mother has time to write.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any one care to correspond with a young married woman? I have three children, so you can well imagine I am kept busy. But I always make time for the things I like to do. I enjoy sewing, making quilts, listening to the radio, and writing letters. I have a few Pen Pals, but I'm sure that I can find time for more.

GREENPORT MOTHER.

This shy girl will welcome your letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope to hear from girls who enjoy writing letters. I'm a girl of eighteen, rather shy, and have very few friends. I like parties, dancing, swimming, and other sports. I will gladly exchange snapshots with any one, so here's hoping that I will receive at least one letter from every State in the Union!

JERSEY POLLY.

He'll tell you about the wilds of Canada.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonely young fellow of seventeen, with auburn hair,

blue eyes, and a good-natured disposition. My hobbies are swimming, skating, and trapping. I can tell you boys all about the wilds of Canada, gold mining, et cetera. I'll answer all letters.

TRAPPER.

Get in tune with this musical Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who wants to correspond with a South Carolina girl of fourteen? I have blue eyes, blond, wavy hair, am considered pretty, can sing, dance, recite, and play the piano. Won't some of you girls please write to me? I have been to Europe, and will tell you all about my trip. Here's hoping! CAROLINA BLONDIE.

She wants to hear from sincere Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I enter your Corner again? I have two very lovely Pen Pals, but there is always room for more. I want to hear from sincere Pals who will write more than one letter. I have lots of spare time. I'm a married woman of thirty-five, friendly, sociable, and promise to answer all letters from far and near.

A GOOD SCOUT.

Only fifteen, but she's sympathetic and understanding.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely girl of fifteen, enjoy skating, dancing, taking long walks, and am interested in anything girls of my age like. I want to hear from Pals everywhere, regardless of age, so won't some of you girls please write to me? I'm sure you'll find that I have an understanding heart.

SWISSVALE MISS.

Friendly and handsome.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a very lonesome young man of twenty-four who likes to write letters and will be a true Pal. I am nearly six feet tall, considered handsome, and make friends easily. I have been abroad twice, and have also traveled in our own United States. I will answer all letters and exchange snapshots.

CALIFORNIA J. M.

She promises long, chummy letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Girls from far and near, won't you write to a lonely New Jersey girl of sixteen? I like outdoor sports, writing letters, and collecting pictures of movie stars. I promise long,

chummy replies to all letters received, and will gladly exchange snapshots. Won't you take me for your friend, girls?

SMILING SOPHIE.

She has been in every State in the Union.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea in your Corner. I'm a girl of eighteen, and a freshman in college. I am an orphan, have traveled in every State in the Union, have my own car, and live in the home of one of my best friends. She has lost her father, so I always try to cheer her up. I would like to hear from girls from all over the world, and promise interesting replies.

FRESHMAN BESS.

Here's a friend for you older Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a middle-aged widow living with my daughter, and would very much like to correspond with older Pen Pals, regardless of where they hail from. I lost my husband two years ago, and know that hearing from other lonely Pen Pals would help us all to keep cheerful. Please, Pals, write to me.

NEWARK PAL.

Who'll write to this college boy?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a college fellow of twenty-one, and need friends badly. I am tall, in my senior year at college, and majoring in Spanish. I enjoy sports, especially swimming and tennis, and will answer all letters promptly. Come on, boys, and let me hear from you. I'm sure we can be friends.

SARATOGA ROSS.

Cynnie is crazy about music.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a shy girl of seventeen, live in California, and am very lonely. I love to dance, am crazy about music, and I'm sure that I can make my letters interesting. I'll be waiting hopefully to hear from at least one Pen Pal from every State, and especially from those who live in California.

CYNNIE.

Help her to find life worth while.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is an S O S for Pen Pals from a young widow of twenty-eight. I am working, have my own car, and although I go out sometimes, I am usually lonely, and it would be a treat to hear from single and married Pals every-

where. I will be a sincere friend to all who write.

LIVERPOOL CURLY.

She loves to write letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room in your Corner for a lonesome city girl? I am seventeen, considered good-looking, am fond of all ball games, enjoy movies, and my pet hobby is dancing. I love to write letters, and promise prompt replies. I will also exchange snapshots. Won't all you girls everywhere please drop me a line

UTICA VI.

He has visited several foreign countries.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of twenty-nine, and my profession is nursing. I have been in several foreign countries, and although I keep busy I am often very lonesome. I would like to hear from Pals everywhere, and especially those who are also in the nursing profession. I'll answer all letters.

J. S. M.

You'll find her friendly and sociable.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Girls from far and near, please write to a lonely twelve-year-old girl who has recently moved to a strange city. I have lots of spare time to devote to writing letters, and will be a true friend. Who'll be my very first Pen Pal?

MEDFORDETTE.

Palisades Nan has blond hair and green eyes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please publish my letter in your Corner. I'm a lonely girl of eighteen, with blond hair and green eyes. I am cheerful, sociable, have a pleasant disposition, and would be glad to exchange snapshots with all who care to write to me. I like sports, and am considered a good dancer. I love good times as much as any girl.

PALISADES NAN.

Leland enjoys athletics.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a tall, dark young fellow of twenty-one, and want to hear from Jewish boys everywhere. I enjoy athletics, making friends, and live in New York City. I'm sure that I can make my letters interesting. So get busy, boys, and let me hear from you!

LELAND.



THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

Well-known Authority on Love and Marriage

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

CAN any girl, regardless of how she looks or what she does, win the love of a man? It has been said that girls can win and keep men they love if only they use their heads, and that getting and keeping a man ought to be a woman's greatest career which begins on her wedding day.

Of course, if a girl is beautiful or rich she can sit back and bask in the sun; she will attract men without much effort on her part. But even the plain girl can be charming, intelligent, develop a likable personality, or cultivate some special talent to attract masculine attention.

The world to-day is filled with sweet, charming girls who are hoping to meet the right man and marry. However, many girls, like Lonely June, have hoped and waited, and made friends with men, but somehow failed to find love.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am very unhappy, and would rather talk over my problem with you than with any one else I know. I'm twenty-three, and so discouraged. It just doesn't seem possible for a girl to win

love these days, make some man consider her attractive and desirable.

I'm an average girl in looks, dress well enough, went through high school and one year of college. I couldn't continue my education because I had to help my people. I am now working in the office of a department store.

I have met lots of young men, and have tried to be good friends with them, thinking that it might later lead to love and marriage, but I have been deeply disappointed when the boys started dating other girls steady.

Do you think it is my fault that I haven't been able to get a man to fall in love with me?

I'm considered a "nice" girl, and boys I've met told me that I would certainly make a good wife for some man who was lucky to get me. But they did not try to be serious with me; I already feel like an old maid.

There is a young man in my club who also goes to the same church I do, and I like him a lot. In fact, if I thought there was a chance for me to win his love, I wouldn't find it hard to fall in love with him.

Whenever we meet at the club or in church, and he is not with some other girl, he always offers to take me home. Sometimes on the way home we stop for ice cream.

I have known him for six months, but I'm not satisfied. I like him so much. Don't you think he would be encouraged if

I told him how well I liked him? Do you think that I will ever find a man who will fall in love with me? LONELY JUNE.

No one has ever been able to find out how or why first springs the attraction between a man and a girl. To some of us it happens sooner than to others. However, it is foolish on your part to feel so discouraged, my dear; although I know it's no fun for a girl to be alone while boys escort other girls. But twenty-three is not as ancient as it might seem to you.

There are no set rules as to how a girl can win a man. The technique that wins men varies, because all of us are not poured into the same mold. We humans may be fundamentally alike, but every person is different, and is attractive in his or her own way. For instance, one girl may adopt the clinging-vine attitude, and another prefer to appear independent, and yet each may win the man she loves.

But there are many ways a girl can attract men friends. The next time you are at the club, or a party, pay more attention to the boys who seem lonesome. Encourage them to talk about themselves, show them you are interested in their plans, and before you know, you will have more than one young man asking you to go places with him.

As for the boy you like, if you have reason to believe that he is interested in you, try to make him realize that you like him without putting it into words. Be friendly, but not too eager. Perhaps that has been a fault of yours in the past. Boys, as a rule, shy away from a girl who makes it too obvious that she is interested in them. Keeping a man guessing a little is better than openly telling him of your affection.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a regular reader of Love Story Magazine, and like

it from cover to cover. I'm a girl twenty years of age, and for the past four years have been going with a young man ten years my senior.

During the first three years he was always very devoted to me, but this year we have been drifting apart. We see each other three times a week. We used to be together almost every evening.

I still love him very much, but he has changed. He is always busy with one thing or another, and does not come to my house until late in the evening.

I never say a word of reproach, and we never quarrel, as I am quiet by nature and keep things to myself. I have no parents, and there isn't a soul I could talk to. I have lots of friends, and they can't help noticing the change in my boy friend.

My friends told me I was foolish not to break with him, and said that he dates another girl, but they can't prove it. I couldn't stand their talk any longer, so I had it out with him.

He said that he still loved me and would do anything for me, but that he did not feel he ought to get married because he doesn't want to settle down. He said that when we first started going together he thought he would like to get married some day, but since then he has changed his mind. I don't understand him.

Since we started going together I have never been out with any one else. I love him more than I can say. I do his book-keeping and typing for him, and otherwise help him with his work. He comes to my grandmother's to eat, and we usually cook what he likes.

He is of a different religion, but I wouldn't mind changing mine. Do you think this is why he does not want to think of marriage? I feel that I can't let things drag on this way any longer. Should I break with him? It wouldn't be easy for me to do that. DISCOURAGED JANE.

It is not always easy to be practical when one is in love, I know. But if your friend has made it so plain that he is not anxious to marry you, it would be better to let him go. Perhaps he would wake up if you were to hide your disappointment and heartache, and appear interested in other young men. In some cases pretended indifference goes a long way.

We cannot get away from the fact,

my dear, that when a man really loves a girl, he is not indifferent when the question of marriage comes up.

However, if your friend does not appear anxious if you seem interested in another man, then you must try to grin and bear it, and be glad that you have found out his love is not very deep.

On the other hand, if you have not been out with any one else since you were sixteen, it is possible that you are mistaking infatuation for love. Think it over, Jane.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a bride of three months. I am twenty and my husband is twenty-six. He is a good, clean, quiet, and sensible man. I love him with all my heart.

I am his second wife, and the trouble is that I cannot forget that he was married before. In fact, I'm jealous of his former wife. I never speak of her, because we had an understanding that what is past is past, and only our future together counts.

Does any woman ever get that "housekeeper" feeling? I do. I know that my husband loves me, but there is that shadow hanging over my head, and I can't seem to get away from it.

But let me tell you about my husband. His first wife was a chorus girl. She came to him sick at heart, and he felt sorry for her. His sympathy was mistaken for love, and they were married.

Six months later she had a child by another man; she admitted this herself. She was sick for quite a while, but my husband took every care of her, and paid all the doctor bills. When she was well again they separated, and he got a divorce.

I knew all this when I married him, and that he had had a mean break. My husband makes a good salary. I get one third of it for expenses, and he keeps the rest. But he never tells me what he does with the money, and I know he is not saving.

I feel that on pay days we should talk over money matters, make a budget, and put the rest in the bank. But every time I try to talk things over with him he gets peeved and tells me that *he* knows where the money goes.

We have a nice car, but he is always busy and cannot take me riding. So I know he does not spend his money on me. And I

don't think he gives it to any one; I think he is just careless. How can I get him to confide in me? I'm not a gold digger, of course; I just want him to save so that we can some day have our own home.

Please help me. I am always blue and discouraged.

DISAPPOINTED BRIDE.

The only way you can arrive at a solution to your problem is to have a heart-to-heart talk with your husband. You say that he gets peeved whenever you want to find out where the rest of his salary goes. Perhaps your approach is wrong. Maybe, instead of making it a friendly talk, you seem demanding.

Certainly there should be perfect confidence between a husband and wife where money matters are concerned, as well as in all other things. An open and frank attitude should be the basis of all plans. The moment a husband or wife begins to be secretive in any way, doubt and suspicion rise to the surface and unhappiness follows.

Do you know if your husband is paying alimony to his first wife? If so, then that would be one explanation where some of his money goes. At any rate, don't let your husband's seemingly secretive attitude ruin your happiness. Try to draw him out in an indirect way.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I don't know how to start my story, but I'll do the best I can. I'm a girl of nearly eighteen, and have been engaged for four months. The trouble is that I don't know whether I love the boy or not.

He is very jealous, but will not admit it, and always questions me. Whenever I try to joke, it always ends up in a quarrel. Of course, he tells me he's sorry, but I hate to think of being his wife and quarreling all the time over the least little thing, although I don't expect to get married just yet.

My boy friend wants to be alone with me all the time. I even lost two girl friends because I could not go anywhere without him. I became engaged only because he begged and begged me. I put it off as long as I could, then he started to

say that maybe I wanted some other man. Of course, I said that I didn't, but I really did want to go with other boys.

I don't mean that I'm in love with any one else, but I would like to go with a crowd of boys and girls I know. I'd love to have plenty of fun, and I can't budge without him. He comes over every day, and I can't stand being tied down this way and not seeing my other friends. Sometimes I can't even stand him.

Once I told him that I would break with him unless he stopped quarreling, but he couldn't keep his promise, and yet I can't seem to find the courage to tell him I don't care to be engaged to him any longer.

Shall I break with him and go out with the crowd and have good times? I don't feel as if I were ready to settle down to an engagement and, later, marriage. My friend is twenty-one, fairly good-looking, and he rarely goes out with his friends. What shall I do? LILYANNE.

It was very foolish on your part, my child, to let yourself be talked into an engagement with a man you do not love. You cannot expect to be happy if you marry him, and it spoils all your chances to meet some one who could make you happy.

It would be only fair to yourself, no matter what your friend says, if you broke this engagement immediately. Tell him frankly that you do not return his love and want a chance to go out more and meet other young people.

You might remain friends with him if he will not want you to himself all the time. If he is willing to wait on the chance that you might learn to care for him, perhaps you will like him better. But if he refuses to listen to this suggestion, it will be positive proof that he does not really love you. In that case let him go and don't worry about him any more.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I hope you can help me with my problem.

I am a girl nearly eighteen years of age and have dated lots of boys, but have never taken any one seriously until I met a good-looking young man at a party, and he offered to take me home.

We had a good many dates after that and he seemed to think a lot of me. He always acted as if he couldn't wait to see me again. However, he is considered the type of boy who goes with a girl for a while and drops her when another nice girl comes along.

One evening I asked my younger sister and another boy to come along with us. Well, you might easily guess what happened. Instead of being attentive to me, my friend wanted to take my sister home and asked her to go out with him some time. But she didn't like him and refused.

Since then we have not been out together. He told several friends he wanted to see me again but did not care to date me. He said that I had too many boy friends and might get into trouble and put the blame on him. But I don't go out with other boys as often as I used to before I met him.

How can I get him back? LONESOME.

But why try? If this boy had really liked you he would have been more considerate of your feelings. Of course, a young man who is not engaged has every right to go out with any girl who interests him. But if he prefers one girl to all the others, he is careful not to hurt her. Those who are fickle are inclined to be selfish and thoughtless.

My suggestion is that you try to forget him, and make up your mind to have good times with your other friends. You have plenty of time for serious things like love and marriage. And when real love comes into your life, you will not have to worry how to keep your man, or feel afraid that he might find another girl more interesting.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been reading your department for some time, and wonder if there is any help for a woman in my situation.

When I was one year old my mother died, and my father took good care of me and my older sister. He died when I was eight, but left enough money to put us through high school. My grandparents arranged to have me and my sister live with them.

My grandmother liked my sister, but she didn't care what happened to me. I never

had any clothes or friends, although my grandmother was supposed to see to it that I was happy. My sister had everything, and my grandmother spent some of my money on her.

I was so miserable I started running around and didn't care what became of me. The girls at school wouldn't be friends with me, although I had never done them any harm.

Finally I started staying out evenings and running around with a wild crowd. They didn't like me, either, but I liked my freedom and hung around.

Then I met a very nice boy who came from a good family, and he seemed to like me a lot. I was sixteen at the time. I decided to give up the old crowd and settle down with him. My grandparents liked this boy and said I could marry him if I wanted to.

However, I met another fellow who drove a truck to different cities. We became friendly, and one day he took me to a circus in another city, and after that we went to an all-night dance and didn't get home until the next morning.

My grandmother was waiting for me. She told me to pack my clothes and get out. And she told Roy that if he wanted to, he could take care of me.

I didn't want to go with him, but he said that since my grandmother said he should take care of me, he would do just that. I told him that I didn't care for him, but would try to make him happy. So we were married.

We went to live with his people for a while, and once he got mad and beat me. Four months after our marriage we went housekeeping by ourselves. I had a few hundred dollars that my grandmother said was all that was left of the money my father left me, and wanted to buy furniture for our home.

Instead, my husband took the money and bought another truck. I have not regretted that, because it has helped him to get established in a business of his own. He now has three trucks and men to help him.

We have two little boys, and I ought to be happy, but there are some things I can't forget. For instance, twice since we have been married my husband started running around with different girls, and didn't seem to care whether he was true to me or not.

During the past year he has been playing fair with me, I know, but although I love him and he loves me and the children, I'm not happy. I can't do anything I want. I can't go to dances, or parties, and he

thinks I should stay home all the time.

I often would like to go with him when he drives the trucks to near-by large cities, but he won't take me.

I told him that I would leave the children with some one else and go out anyway, but he said he wouldn't put up with that. But I'm young, not yet twenty-one, and just ache to have a little fun now and then. Mrs. Brown, what shall I do?

Of course, I wouldn't want to leave him. I have a comfortable home, but no clothes; I am good-looking and would love to dress up a little sometimes. My husband gives me very little spending money. I'm nearly out of my mind staying home all the time, but he won't take me anywhere.

UNHAPPY MOLLIE.

It is hard to understand how some husbands can expect their wives to be satisfied with just staying home all the time and attending to household duties. Why any husband should close his eyes to the fact that his wife is a human being and has as much right to personal freedom as he, is a mystery.

All married couples, whether young or not so young, should plan for some kind of recreation, even if it is seeing only one movie a week, or playing a friendly game of cards with friends. A bride may for a time be satisfied to stay home because her husband seems anxious to have her there, but she will not be satisfied for long. It is only natural that woman should want other interests besides keeping house and looking after children.

Perhaps your husband does not realize how unhappy you are. Have you tried talking things over with him? Maybe you could persuade him to take you out, say, once a week. I'm sure that if he sees how much more enjoyable life is with some play mixed in, he won't begrudge you a little fun now and then.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read the letters written by Drew Carter, Mack, and Lonely Audrey, and would like to give my opinion of their experiences.

Like Mack, I am married, except that my wife and I separated after only four months of marriage. I am now waiting for her to divorce me, as I would prefer it that way. I still think she is a wonderful girl, but we just couldn't make a go of it.

As for Carter, if he hangs onto his present attitude toward girls in general for a few more years, he will become a sour old bachelor whom no one will tolerate.

Why don't you own up, Carter, that something has turned you against girls? You think that everybody must conform to your ideas, and if they don't, they are wrong.

I felt that way myself when my wife and I parted. I thought that all women were poison. But I got over it and now I find life very much worth while. You have as many faults as the rest of us, so don't expect everybody to think you are perfect.

Find a girl you can like and give her a chance, and I'll bet your trouble will not bother you any more. It never pays to judge others by yourself, you know.

Lonely Audrey has my sympathy. I might say that girls who insist on being too old-fashioned will stay unpopular. Today we have to move with the world. I don't mean you have to forget conventions and do what some women do to keep men interested in them. But if you had tried to be more agreeable to your husband he would never have wanted to look at any one else.

Be tactful when you make new friends, Audrey. If you go to the right places you will find the right company, and if others see that you are sincere, you won't have any difficulty finding the right man.

Many women let the men think they are different than they really are, so you can't blame men for presuming too much. If you accept expensive gifts and let a man spend a lot of money, he will naturally think that you are a gold digger and treat you accordingly.

Every man respects a good woman. The fact that your men friends have stopped dating you does not prove that they are against a divorced woman. My hat's off to you for keeping your ideals. And if you are patient you'll be sure to meet a man who will recognize your true worth. But don't say all men are alike, because that is not fair.

CHICAGO READER.

In marriage or anything else, those who are best liked are never cynical. Let us hope that Drew

Carter, Mack, and Lonely Audrey read your letter and try to see things from a more optimistic point of view.

The world is likely to judge us by our actions; it rarely makes allowances for grudges we insist on nursing, instead of trying to face disappointments with courage. Those who manage to keep their high ideals are usually better off in the end, because they will eventually find the worth-while things in life.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl of eighteen and live in a small town. About six months ago I fell in love with a very nice boy who also lives here. However, I don't think that he really loves me. He has said several times that he is not sure of himself.

At times he acts rather strange. I mean, he wants to be free and not go steady with me. And yet when I tell him to go ahead and have other girl friends he stays away only a few days and then wants to come back, and I always take him back. Do you think I should?

I often think I'm foolish to make up with him the way I do, and put up with his whims. But he is always so nice to me, comes to see me almost every evening, and we have lots of fun together.

I think it would do him good if I acted cool and made him think that he was going to lose me. But I love him and can't bring myself to do that.

His parents are always quarreling about his going with me. His mother likes me, but his father does not. When we started seeing each other he was going with a wild crowd, and sometimes we used to go with them. But now we don't see them any more, and I often wonder if that is why he's so moody. There were other boys and girls we used to go with, but we don't any more.

Please tell me what to do. I don't want to quarrel and lose him; I could never be happy again if we ever parted.

JUNE.

Well, my dear, it is never wise for a girl to wear her heart on her sleeve and allow the boy to become too sure of her. Of course, if you are not engaged, you should try not to resent it if he wants to go out with some one else. Whenever a man

feels that he wants to see another girl, it is foolish and useless to try to prevent him. You did quite right to tell him he was free to do as he pleased.

The fact that you two have dropped out of youthful activities in your town is quite likely to be the cause of his restlessness and moody spells. Since the boys and girls you used to go with were not the type you wanted to associate with, how about making new friends? Join some club in your town, and encourage your friend to do the same.

Young people should not be alone together too much, no matter how fond they are of each other. Besides, it is easier for a girl to keep a boy's interest if she has other friends and he knows there is a possibility that she might learn to like some one else.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I hope you will help me with my problem. I have been going with a man for six years. He always had to take care of his mother, but two months ago she died.

Now he tells me that he wants to wait another year before getting married. What worries me is that he is living in the home of his married cousin and seems to be satisfied. When I go to visit his cousin, she is very nice to me, but he hardly ever looks at me.

I am a widow of forty-eight, and he is ten years younger, but looks older than I sometimes because he is plump. I am slender, and look very young. I see him every evening until eleven o'clock, so I know he isn't going with any one else.

I'm crazy about him, and he knows it. Do you think that I should be cold toward him? His cousin has a little girl and he makes a great fuss over her. Do you think he acts this way because he knows it will make me jealous?

His cousin tells me what time he comes home, et cetera, and he said that he would take a furnished room somewhere so that I couldn't watch him. I have been going with him for such a long time that I am used to him.

Do you think he still cares for me, because he comes to see me almost every

evening and on Sundays? Last June I tried to break with him because I thought he didn't care for me any more, and started going out with another man. My friend was almost out of his mind and said he would never give me up. I wonder if he still feels that way about me.

Do you think I am foolish to worry so? I will try to follow your advice. I don't know what to do about him. VI.

Surely after going with you for six years your friend ought to be able to make up his mind as to whether or not he wants to marry you. Perhaps the trouble is that he is too sure of you, and that is why he thinks he can take his time. But knowing him as well as you do, you should settle this matter without wasting more time.

A great many of us are sensitive on the subject of age. But I would urge you to take into consideration the fact that your friend is ten years your junior. This difference in age may not seem important now. But there is a possibility that a few years from now it might cause you a great deal of unhappiness.

Have a heart-to-heart talk with him. Letting things drift will get you nowhere. After all, he is not the only man in the world.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: How can a girl be happy when the boy she loves does not appreciate her? I am seventeen, considered good-looking, and have never done anything to be ashamed of. I don't go in for drinking, smoking, or petting, although I enjoy good times, and love to go to the movies, dances, and parties.

Two years ago I met a boy with whom I fell in love. I know you will think I was too young to really be in love, but I still feel the same about him. Although we did not keep steady company we often went out together, and had some very enjoyable times. I was more in love than ever, but I didn't let him see how much I cared.

Here is my problem. A few weeks ago we went for a ride and Paul turned out to be altogether different than I thought he was. He told me that I didn't seem to be

the kind of girl he wanted to go on dating because I wouldn't pet, drink, or let him make love to me.

When we came home that night he said he didn't think he would come to see me for a while; not until I decided to be a good sport and do as he wanted me to. He told me I should call him up. Of course, I haven't done that, and don't intend to.

But ever since that evening I have cried myself to sleep almost every night. I go out with other boys, but they mean nothing to me. Paul is always on my mind, and I don't know what I will do if he makes no move to make up with me. I'm so miserable I don't enjoy anything.

I often see him at dances, but he never asks me for a dance, although whenever I happen to look at him I find him watching every move I make.

Mrs. Brown, I know I can never be happy if he doesn't come to see me again. Please tell me what to do.

HEARTSICK ANNE.

Young love is not always happy love, especially in cases where the boy forgets to act like a gentleman. You may be sure, my dear, that any man who suggests that a girl lower her ideals in order to please him, neither loves, respects, nor appreciates her.

I can well understand that you feel blue and unhappy. But surely you would not care to be friendly with this boy again? He has shown quite unmistakably that he is not the kind of boy you want to be friends with.

Make up your mind to forget him. Compel yourself to go out with others. Time heals all hurts, and later on you will be glad that you were strong enough to remain true to yourself.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl sixteen years of age. Six months ago I fell in love with a man who is a number of years older than I. He told me that he loved me and wants me to marry him when I am eighteen.

I am inclined to be quiet, although I enjoy shows and parties as much as any girl. Several times different friends have tried to separate us, but we dropped them and are still going together.

When this man was much younger he married a girl he knew from school, but their marriage went on the rocks. She started going out with other men, and even encouraged him to date other girls. Finally she left him, and they were divorced. Their one child is living with him.

Of course, I don't hold his previous marriage against him. I am very fond of his little son. My friend's people like me very much, and my parents allow me to go steady with him. Everything seems to be all right, but sometimes I don't know whether I should marry him or not. Maybe we won't get along well because he is fourteen years my senior.

Won't you please tell me what you think about my problem? I'm happy enough when we are together, so I suppose I am in love with him. But I am so undecided sometimes. Please help me. ENA.

One of the important things in life we all must face is that no one can make serious decisions for us. And this is especially true where romance is involved. Certainly a noticeable difference in age will matter in some ways; the young wife may find that her husband's and her tastes are far apart, and compatibility is one of the rocks upon which the foundation of marriage should be laid.

If you are in doubt about your feelings for this man, give yourself plenty of time to decide. But even if you think you are in love with him, be sure to have other friends. I mean boys near your own age. If your friend loves you and is anxious that you make no mistake, he will be broad-minded and not give in to silly jealousy. He will understand that it is often hard for a girl of your age to be sure if she is really in love, or if it is only a crush.

